

STRINGSHIFT

Solo Guitar Improvisation: Process, Methodology and Practice

by

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Music Performance)

Tasmanian College of the Arts - Conservatorium of Music

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September 2014

Declaration of Originality

This exegesis contains the results of research carried out at the University of Tasmania Conservatorium of Music between 2011 and 2014. It contains no material that, to my knowledge, has been accepted for a degree or diploma by the University or any other institution, except by way of background information that is duly acknowledged in the exegesis. I declare that this exegesis is my own work and contains no material previously published or written by another person except where clear acknowledgment of reference has been made in the text.

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Signed:

Anthony Garcia

Date: 5 March, 2015

Acknowledgments

I am extremely grateful to my principal supervisor Glen Hodges for posing the right questions at the right time, encouraging me to be forthright in my convictions and affirming the novelty of my approach. To my long-time supervisor Dr. Anne Marie Forbes for scrupulous editing and overall narrative guidance throughout the writing of this exegesis. My guitar teachers, James Lloyd, Julian Byzantine and Isolde Schaupp for their unique insights into the art of Classical guitar performance practice. Nicholas O'Brien and Peter Freeman for their contribution to the video and audio documentation of this research. Annie Boyd for her artistic inspiration. My students, past and present, for enduring my endless pedagogical experiments and inspiring a passion for learning and sharing. And finally, my eternal thanks go to my wife Jennifer and sons Ruben and Gabriel for their patience love and support throughout my candidature.

Abstract

The study and interpretation of ‘fixed music’ remains the predominant mode of practice for most classical guitarists. Despite this, an emerging body of literature highlighting the historical significance of improvisation in guiding developments in performance practice and composition beckons a reinterpretation of prior methods and practices and offers conceptual guidance for a contemporary reimagining of this neglected art form. In building on this research, I have examined the process, methodology and practice of solo guitar improvisation and outlined a personal method developed from an amalgam of experimental and historically informed practices.

In conceptualizing my approach I have reengaged with the classical guitars performative lineage, examining methods and practices whose origins date back to the seventeenth-century Spanish Baroque guitar methods of Francisco Corbetta, Gaspar Sanz and Santiago de Murcia. My approach builds on the important work of Dusan Bogdanovic and Ralph Towner, whose instructional methods offer technical, theoretical and psychological insights into the process of solo guitar improvisation. The parameters of my approach are defined by an evolving vocabulary of materials and practices garnered from instructional methods, a range of plucked string instrumental techniques, procedures and forms from early music, *flamenco*, Celtic and Latin American guitar practices along with incorporated materials from jazz, ethnic and contemporary experimental musics.

This research chronicles the evolution of my unique form of practice, outlining the interlocking processes and methods that informed a series of performances featuring improvised music for solo guitar. A folio containing a series of recorded performances along with a selection of preparative scores is accompanied by an exegetical document that explains the applied research methodology, the conceptual and philosophical framework underpinning my approach, with an analysis of selected performances.

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Preface

My formal Classical music education has long been juxtaposed with an enthusiasm for diverse styles and forms of music-making. Playing electric guitar in rock bands at school, exploring tertiary jazz studies and later performing with a range of instrumentalists from distinct musical and cultural backgrounds fostered a life-long fascination with the art of improvisation. Two recent collaborations *Zarabanda*¹ (Latin harp and classical guitar duo) and *Desert Stars Dancing*² (didgeridoo and guitar duo) drew on a range of interactive improvisational practices in both performances and recordings. In formal research terms two projects, ‘The Development of Classical Guitar Technique Through Improvisation Drills’, an Honours degree project (University of Queensland, 1996) and ‘An Introduction to Guitar Harmony and Improvisation’ an elective research project for my Masters degree in performance (University of Queensland, 2000) have informed my evolving conception of music-making and my approach, in particular, to classical guitar improvisation. While this research has been influential, such projects were limited in scope relative to the parameters governing this research. The honours project focused purely on melodic improvisation (developing scale and arpeggio variations with classical guitar fingering) and the Masters project examined a method for teaching improvisation to novices within an ensemble context. These projects did not examine methodologies for *solo* guitar improvisation nor were they conducted within the performative research paradigm governing this research.³ Improvisation has been a fountain of inspiration for my compositional output, it has not, until now, been an art form that manifested in performance as a soloist. The reasons for this, along with the methodological and conceptual strategies employed in the formation of my approach will be discussed throughout the subsequent chapters of this exegesis.

¹ Anthony Garcia and Sandra Real, *Zarabanda*, - *Moliendo Café*. CD-MMLL-002, 2008.

² William Barton and Anthony Garcia, *Desert Stars Dancing – Eclectic Soundscapes for Didgeridoo and Guitar*. CD-MMLL-003, 2011.

³ Brad Haseman, *A Manifesto for Performative Research*. *Media International Australia incorporating Culture and Policy*, theme issues “Practice-led Research” (no. 119): pp. 98-106. Haseman’s manifesto offers clear insight into this relatively new form of research. He offers supportive arguments for its acceptance, hypothesising that ‘performative research’ could be a third category of research, distinct from traditional quantitative and qualitative methods.

Research Methodology

This project unpacks the intertwined concepts and processes that have informed my approach to solo guitar improvisation through the prism of performative research. As such, the central thesis of this project emerges through an examination of my unique approach to solo performance. This is framed by what Haseman describes as an, “‘enthusiasm of practice,’ something which is exciting, something which may be unruly, or indeed something which may be just becoming possible as new technology or networks allow.”⁴ Processes of improvisation, experimentation, composition, performance and reflection are applied in the creation of a body of work where my unique contribution to knowledge is, “made in the form of an aesthetic argument articulated in the [recorded] musical works themselves.”⁵

Maria Santi acknowledges the efficacy of performative research strategies in the study of improvisation stating that, “action research and improvisational work appear to share the fact that in their own separate ways they seek to build bridges between theory and practice.”⁶ While my approach is developed through the variation and transformation of extant techniques and materials common to those used in the canon of classical guitar repertoire (scales, modes, arpeggios and chord progressions etc), it also incorporates a synthesis of ideas borrowed, adapted and developed from a diverse range of guitar styles and musics whose underpinning technical dimensions are applicable to the classical guitar. Selected early music practices, later *flamenco* and Latin American folk styles as well as Celtic, African and Jazz guitar styles and musics have been studied and amalgamated into a range of improvisation frameworks that form the foundation of my methodology. The conceptual framework underpinning this methodology has emerged through a survey of historical sources, instructional methods, recordings and performances. Guitarists such as Lenny Breau, Ralph Towner, Dusan Bogdanovic, Egberto Gismonti, as well as many fingerstyle guitarists from diverse folk and ethnic traditions have all helped inspire and inform the intertwining musical and conceptual foundations of my performance practice.

⁴ Brad Haseman, *A Manifesto for Performative Research*. Media International Australia incorporating Culture and Policy, theme issues “Practice-led Research” (no. 119): pp. 98-106.

⁵ Thomas Reiner and Robin Fox, “The Research Status of Musical Composition in Australia”, *Australian Journal of Music Education*, No. 1 (2003): 3.

⁶ Maria Santi, “Improvisation as a Phenomenon and Tool for Communication, Interactive Action and Learning.” In *Improvisation - Between Technique and Spontaneity*. Ed. Maria Santi, (UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), 119.

Defining Improvisation

As improvisation is a word used to describe a diverse array of music making processes it is important to define its meaning particularly as the term is continually referred to throughout this study in describing my approach to performance and composition. Improvisation, as described by Nettl is

The creation of a musical work, or the final form of the work, as it is being performed. It may involve the work's immediate composition by its performers or the elaboration or adjustment of an existing framework, or anything in between. To some extent every performance involves elements of improvisation, although its degree varies according to period and place, and to some extent every improvisation rests on a series of conventions or implicit rules.⁷

This definition gives scope to the broad range of strategies that can be employed in the presentation of improvised music. A contrasting definition limits the scope of improvisational practice to “the simultaneous invention and sonic realization of music; it excludes work fixed in writing as well as the realization of an extant work, i.e. performance, reproduction, interpretation.”⁸ While the first definition is all encompassing I interpret the second as referring to a more narrow, specified understanding of improvisation that could be described as free, abstract or “absolute” improvisation.⁹

There are many more descriptors one may employ when referring to an improvised work. The terms extemporization, aleatoric and impromptu also describe types of music where the work is composed or arranged to a greater or lesser extent in the moment of performance. There are, however, distinctions relating to the historical usage of these terms and the kinds of practices they describe. We often find the words referring back to one another. Impromptu, for example, is defined as, “a short piece of instrumental music, especially a solo, that is reminiscent of an

⁷ Bruno Nettl, "Improvisation." *Grove Music Online*.

<<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/13738>>. (accessed, July 28, 2014)

⁸ Bruno Nettl, *In the Course of Performance – Studies in the World of Musical Improvisation*. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), 10.

⁹ Jeff Pressing, “Psychological Constraints on Improvisation.” In *In the Course of Performance – Studies in the World of Musical Improvisation*. Ed. Bruno Nettl with Melinda Russell, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), 52.

improvisation.”¹⁰ While this research examines a diverse array of distinct improvisational devices and strategies, improvisation is deemed a sufficient descriptor when referring to my music-making approach.

¹⁰ Oxford Dictionary Online, “Impromptu,” <http://oxforddictionaries.com/> (accessed May 10, 2013).

Chapter 1: Literature Review

I. Improvisation Process

To varying extents practitioners have helped mythologize the process of improvisation by linking technical and theoretical devices and strategies with philosophical, psychological, religious and spiritual concerns. George Russell's *Lydian Chromatic Concept of Tonal Organization* is a well-known example of this, linking a 'philosophy of tonality' to an amalgam of religious and spiritual beliefs in particular, the philosophy of George Gurdjieff whose book series, *All and Everything*¹¹ emerged in Russell's notion of the 'all and everything of tonality' and the 'all and everything of music'.¹² While these kinds of links are not unique to improvisational practice, the methods and literature explored throughout this research reveal many practitioners of improvisation grapple with psychological, philosophical and spiritual concepts alongside technical, theoretical and aesthetic processes of musical creation.¹³ Dusan Bogdanovic's seminal method, *Counterpoint for Guitar – with Improvisation in the Renaissance Style and Study in Motivic Metamorphosis*¹⁴ encourages broader thinking around the creative process, suggesting a reorientation

...from narrowly focused specialization (where the performer, composer, and improviser have become almost caricatures of their own definitions) to a more balanced position where every musician (artist, human being) has a possibility of developing a unique integration of many layers of human creativity.¹⁵

For Bogdanovic, processes of transformation in music reflect similar processes in life. He suggests that

Transformative processes give us a strong clue as to how we might both accept and transcend the subject. If the narrow psychological profile of the premodern individual represented a limited but secure path, then the unbound but anxiety-ridden modern individual loses touch with history and is threatened with disappearance in a relative

¹¹ George I. Gurdjieff, *All and Everything – Ten Books in Three Series*. (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1950)

¹² Ingrid Monson, Russell, "Coltrane and Modern Jazz", in *In the Course of Performance – Studies in the World of Musical Improvisation*, Bruno Nettl ed. with Melinda Pressing. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), 155.

¹³ Marcel Cobussen, *Thresholds: Re-Thinking Spirituality and Music*. (Burlington: Ashgate, 2008) This book offers an insightful contemporary perspective on the link between musical practice, improvisation and spirituality.

¹⁴ Dusan Bogdanovic, *Counterpoint for Guitar - with Improvisation in the Renaissance Style and Study in Motivic Metamorphosis*. (Ancona: Berben, 1996)

¹⁵ Bogdanovic, *Counterpoint for Guitar*, 5.

unintegrated universe.¹⁶

The act of improvising, and the transformative, transcendent, even mystical, experience it engenders in the practitioner, can induce a plethora of philosophical, psychological and spiritual reflections and perspectives on a broad range of related topics. This informs the mindset of the practitioner and has practical ramifications on both method and practice. While in my own music-making, spiritual concepts of holism and personal transformation lie at the heart of my enthusiasm for improvisation, this research remains centered in the processes that impact the practical and conceptual unfolding of my personal approach to guitar playing; my reflections remain grounded in my practice.

In *The Philosophy of Improvisation*¹⁷ Gary Peters offers philosophical perspectives on the process of improvisation and promotes its importance as an art form. He states that,

Improvisation, in the celebratory sense, conceives of itself as transcending...outmoded structures and threadbare pathways through acts of spontaneity that inhabit the moment, the instant, the pure futurity of the “now”, without history’s “spirit of gravity” (Nietzsche) weighing on the shoulders of the creative artist.”¹⁸

In order, however, to transcend these ‘outmoded structures’ it is necessary to have some understanding of how they work and a capacity to replicate to some extent the ideas and processes that underpin distinct forms and styles in order to transform them into something new. The process of improvisation, therefore, relates to the methods used to develop, vary, deconstruct or synthesize extant materials or ‘outmoded structures.’ In this context the improvised work is developed from ‘something’. This ‘something’ is referred to by Jeff Pressing as the *referent*; “a set of cognitive, perceptual, or emotional structures (constraints) that guide and aid in the production of musical materials.”¹⁹ Musical referents also include: chord progressions, songs, melodies or any musical material or structure that can be learned (imitated or adapted), varied and manipulated in performance.

¹⁶ Bogdanovic, *Counterpoint for Guitar*, 100. Here Bogdanovic demonstrates how deeply he has thought through the improvisation process in developing his method. The broad links to psychology, sociology and history also represent a desire that is common among improvisers to advocate for greater awareness of the fundamental importance of improvisation in fostering a more whole and creative practice.

¹⁷ Gary Peters, *The Philosophy of Improvisation*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

¹⁸ Peters, 18.

¹⁹ Jeff Pressing, “Psychological Constraints on Improvisation,” in *In the Course of Performance – Studies in the World of Musical Improvisation*. Bruno Nettle ed. with Melinda Russell, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), 52.

The studied approach to improvisation being advocated here relates, in part, to stylistically constrained processes common in jazz, early music and ethnic musics, where compositional devices are used to enhance, extend and develop an evolving canon of compositions that function as improvisational frameworks. The analysis and development of these materials prior to performance is a fundamental part of the process enabling the development of “one or more optimal structural segmentations of the referent [framework material]...reducing the extent of decision-making required in performance.”²⁰ Improvisational fluency, therefore, emerges “from the creation, maintenance, and enrichment of an associated knowledge base, built into long term memory.”²¹ This knowledge base, may include, “musical materials and excerpts, repertoire, subskills, perceptual strategies, problem solving routines, hierarchical memory structures and schemas, generalized motor programs, and more.”²²

While knowledge and content can be assimilated from a score or instructional method it may also be absorbed both aurally and orally. The aural/oral transmission of content is fundamental to many forms of music-making. It is not surprising, therefore, that most styles and genres that foster, allow space for, or require improvisation are predominantly, aural/oral traditions. Analogies to language frequently appear in the literature. Tord Gustavson states that,

Musical improvisation can be seen as analogous to the production of new sentences with familiar words in common language, and analogous to the process where one develops one’s chains of thought by constantly going over old material anew, searching for constellations and interrelations.²³

For many practitioners improvisational skill develops over time through imitation and experimentation; through trial and error. As Hodges points out, “the art of improvisation involves a number of complex factors, not the least of which is the assimilation of the important idioms and stylistic traits of recognized proponents of the art.”²⁴ Hodges outlines this process in the following way:

²⁰ Jeff Pressing, “Psychological Constraints on Improvisation,” 52.

²¹ Pressing, 53.

²² Pressing, 53.

²³ Tord Gustavson, “The Dialectics of Eroticism,” in *Improvisation - Between Technique and Spontaneity*. Maria Santi ed. (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), 22.

²⁴ Glen Hodges, “The Analysis of Jazz Improvisational Language and Its Use in Generating New Composition and Improvisation.” (PhD diss., Macquarie University, 2007), 11.

Figure 1.1 Improvisation Process²⁵



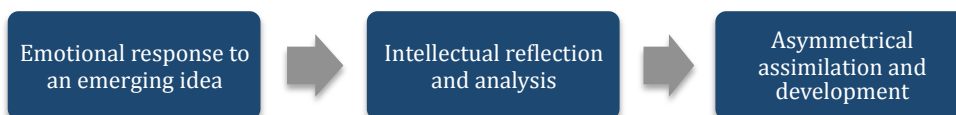
Another way of mapping process can be seen in figure 1.2. The linear nature of the developmental process outlined by Liebman represents a schematic hierarchy that moves from the intellectual to the expressive.²⁶

Figure 1.2 Schematic Process for Acquiring New Information²⁷



In terms of a preparative study model for certain styles and forms of improvisation the above diagram functions as a logical developmental guide. While my practice sometimes aligned with this kind of model I also observed other less linear or hierarchically defined processes at play in my improvisational practice. At times my approach expressed a free channeling of ideas, followed by processes of interpretation, asymmetrical assimilation and development; the traditional linear model was inverted or contorted, as seen in figure 1.3.

Figure 1.3 Another Interpretation of Process²⁸



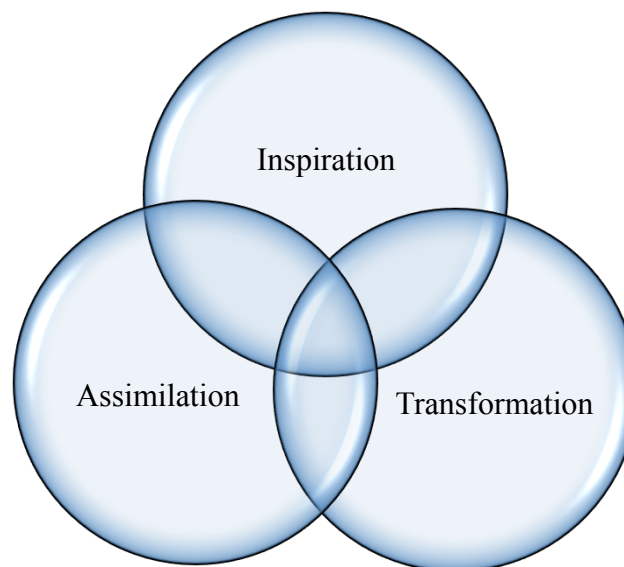
²⁵ Hodges, “The Analysis of Jazz Improvisational Language and Its Use in Generating New Composition and Improvisation.” (Doctoral diss., Sydney: Macquarie University), 16.

²⁶ David Liebman, *A Chromatic Approach to Jazz Harmony and Melody*. (Germany: Advance Music, 1991), 10.

²⁷ David Liebman, *A Chromatic Approach to Jazz Harmony and Melody*. (Germany: Advance Music, 1991).

As my practice seemed to morph between the linear and non-linear, different models were explored in an attempt to represent more accurately the processes underpinning my approach. The term ‘heterarchy’ refers to “a system of organization replete with overlap, multiplicity, mixed ascendancy, and/or divergent-but-coexistent patterns of relation.”²⁹ A heterarchical system may contain hierarchical units within the overall spectrum of processes but they do not dominate it. The room for flux and or ‘mixed ascendancy’, therefore, keeps the system active, dynamic and open to influence and change. The diagram depicted in figure 1.4 is an extension of existing models designed to demonstrate the kind of intertwining/multiplicitous thinking and processing going on in my practice. The asymmetrical development of ideas seems more in keeping with the heterarchical model, however, depending on context there are times when a more traditional linear approach is required. This diagram allows for mixed interpretations of process. The more fluid and balanced the improvisation the closer one comes to the centre point of the diagram where all aspects dissolve into one dynamic multilayered and integrated system: the outer regions of the diagram representing a more linear approach.³⁰

Figure 1.4 Heterarchical Interpretation of Process



²⁹ Karen Stephenson, “Neither a Hierarchy Nor Network: An Argument for Heterarchy.” Ross Dawson blog. http://www.rossdawsonblog.com/HRPS_Heterarchy.pdf (accessed, May 15, 2014).

³⁰ The diagram depicted in figure 1.4 served as a template for explaining the manner in which diverse materials and processes were applied in the development of my methodology. It must be noted that this diagram and those depicted subsequently throughout this exegesis are not categorical or universal depictions of the improvisation process. Rather, they emerged in response to the literature and represent an intuitive work-in-progress reflection of the improvisation process, as it is perceived to function in my own practice.

Heterarchical and linear process models cater for different styles and approaches of improvisation and can be seen as complimentary interrelated aspects that drive both efficiency of action and artful expression.³¹

While methodological systems and pedagogies evolve as a way of systematizing improvisational processes, “systematization can [or should] never be complete; individual differences in subskills and orientations to artistic output require that programs of optimal operation be individually tailored.”³² This individual tailoring of method is intensified in my practice, as I am not following a single method or approach. My improvisations, while connected and related to various systems morph into their own territory, generating unique forms and structures.

While most approaches to improvisation emerge from a style or framework where implicit conventions dictate the general form and content of the music, form need not be restrictive. In explaining his approach Evan Parker suggests, “improvisation makes its own form”.³³ It would seem the manner and extent to which improvisation impacts upon form depends on how rigidly one applies conventions or rules from a predetermined theoretical framework. My research is, in large part, an exploration of how this process impacts upon my practice: how content and form are developed through improvisation.

In a series of interviews with prominent guitar soloists Derek Bailey discovered that most see solo improvisation as a form of ‘self expression.’³⁴ Bailey, regarded as the father of free improvisation, recognized that the solo improviser must develop and apply a ‘personal vocabulary’ of skills and materials in contemporary contexts.³⁵ Bailey outlines his approach to preparing for solo performances. He divides his practice into three areas:

Firstly, the normal basic technical practice, the musical equivalent of running on the spot, the sort of thing that might be useful to the player of any music. The benefit this sort of thing has for improvisation is debatable. Perhaps I do it because I actually like

³¹ Jess Pressing, “Psychological Constraints on Improvisation,” 54.

³² Pressing, “Psychological Constraints on Improvisation.” 53-54.

³³ Derek Bailey, *Improvisation - Its Nature and Practice*. (Ashbourne: The British Library National Sound Archive, 1990), 112.

³⁴ Bailey, 108.

³⁵ Henry Kaiser, “Remembering Derek Bailey,” *Guitar Player Vault - Best of the GP Archives*, entry posted March 15, 2006, <http://www.guitarplayer.com/Default.aspx?tabid=84&ArticleId=12600> (accessed February 27, 2013).

practicing, but it does assist in keeping instrumentally fit...The second area of practice is centered on exercises worked out to deal specifically with the manipulative demands made by new material... The third area, and I suspect this type of practice is done by many improvisers, if they practice at all, is similar to something known in jazz circles at one time as ‘woodshedding’. It is the bridge between technical practice and improvisation.³⁶

In this sense, the materials and devices I have employed in my practice reflect, not only, my aesthetic and stylistic intentions, but reveal the way I have balanced processes of technical development and spontaneous expression; my personal form of ‘woodshedding’.

³⁶ Bailey, 110.

II. Reengaging with the Guitars Improvisational Heritage

The ebb and flow of our creative practice is part of a continuum, connecting us to the past and linking us to the future simultaneously. In studying a Celtic reel, or perhaps listening to a West African musician improvising melodies on the *Kora*, aural perceptions shift, are changed, ever so minutely. Having the skill to improvise enables these aural shifts to inform our music-making approach in a real way. This interactive process seems to underpin most improvisational practices. As E. T. Ferand asserts, improvisation is,

...a powerful force in the creation of new forms and every historical study that confines itself to the practical or theoretical sources that have come down to us in writing or in print, without taking into account the improvisational element in living music practice, must of necessity present an incomplete, indeed a distorted picture. For there is scarcely a single musical technique or form of composition that did not originate in improvisatory practice or was not essentially influenced by it. The whole history of the development of music is accompanied by manifestations of the drive to improvise.³⁷

My research is built on an understanding that improvisation, within the Western Classical music tradition, has played a seminal role in the emergence of new styles, structures, forms and theoretical perspectives and a conviction that it should play a greater role in classical guitar pedagogy and performance practice. My conception of improvisation emerges from this historical context as a mode of performative composition, with the foundational materials informing my music developed through a synthesis of extant materials and modes of improvisation.³⁸

³⁷ E. T. Ferand, *Improvisation in Nine Centuries of Western Music*. (Cologne: Arno Volk Verlag, 1961), 5.

³⁸ The phrase ‘modes of improvisation’ was used as a way of distinguishing between different improvisational methods, styles and strategies. (See Chapter 2, pp. 49-50)

The Spanish Baroque

Important historical threads have emerged throughout this research that have helped contextualise and codify my methodology. The connection between early guitar practices and the emergence of a unique *flamenco* guitar style, for example, highlights the practice of borrowing and adaptation that is fundamental to the evolution of style and approach, as well as to the emergence of new theories, techniques and forms. On this subject Coelho states, that while the

...skilled flamenco guitarists may not have abounded until around the 1930s, many of what would become basic aspects of flamenco guitar technique were present, in however a rudimentary form, in earlier guitar styles, both vernacular and learned. Some of these can be traced to the mid-seventeenth century, and the dance orientated music of the new five-course guitar. In this style vocal verses would be accompanied by strumming (*rasgueados*), while instrumental interludes would feature plucked (*punteado*) or arpeggiated passages, derived from lute style, sometimes played with the thumb. Eighteenth-century *jacaras*, as stylized and refined by classical composers like Santiago de Murcia, foreshadow other flamenco techniques as well as some of the distinctive syncopated rhythms of modern flamenco. In a more general sense the variations or *diferencias* on popular romance tunes composed by *vihuela* players like Luis de Narvaez in the sixteenth century can be regarded as precursors to the flamenco *falsestas* performed between sung passages.³⁹

Historical links such as this offer the contemporary classical guitarist insight into the evolution of practices across a range of styles. Plucked string practices and methods from the Renaissance and Baroque periods not only informed developments in folk genres, they also foreshadowed the guitar methods of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; outlining the fundamental technical and theoretical concepts which underpinned approaches to performance practice, theory, composition and improvisation.⁴⁰

³⁹ Victor Anand Coelho. "Picking Through Cultures: a guitarist's music history." In *The Cambridge Companion to the Guitar*. Ed. Victor A. Coelho, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 16.

⁴⁰ Coelho, "Picking Through Cultures," 16.

As my conception of guitar improvisation has developed from an extensive practical examination of accompaniment patterns across a range of styles outlining key aspects of seventeenth and eighteenth-century Spanish Baroque guitar practice not only helps contextualise my methodology but also highlights the origins of many of the incorporated studies and exercises upon which my practice has evolved. Generally, seventeenth and eighteenth-century Baroque guitar methods and treatises focused on developing harmonic awareness, learning chord progressions through multiple keys, *batutto* (strumming) techniques, and ornamental arpeggio figures suitable for the accompaniment of the popular *danzas* and *bailes* “...that had occupied a central place in the Iberian instrumental music scene for centuries.”⁴¹ These techniques informed a large part of the practices of the Spanish Baroque guitarist.

In the Mexican Baroque manuscript, *Codice Salvidar*, for example, over sixty rhythms and dance forms are outlined. The popular *jacaras*, (probably meaning ruffian) was a common theatre dance not normally part of the main body of the play but inserted as entertainment between acts. Its lively nature would often be used to represent ruffians, rascals, scoundrels or scamps.⁴² Another interesting example found in the collection is the *Gaitas* which “connotes a piece in imitation of the bagpipe; but it also uses a specific ‘standard tune’ that was common in the instrumental repertoire at the turn of the eighteenth century”⁴³. Examples such as this demonstrate the diversity of styles being explored in the Spanish Baroque, and offer an exemplary model for the contemporary integration of culturally distinct materials and forms.

In conceptualising the design of improvisation frameworks, exercises and studies I have also drawn inspiration from historical links between the Spanish Baroque and early Latin American musical cultures. Understanding the influence of African cultural practices on the evolving New World music scene is an important part of this process, highlighting the evolution of rhythms and forms such as “the *cumbe* (or *panchumbe*), *guineo* and *zarambeque*, as well as the *villancicos* in African-Mexican dialects known as *negrillos*, *negritos* or *negro*.”⁴⁴ Prominent forms such as the *chacona* and *zarabanda*, banned by the Spanish court in 1615, for being too “lascivious, dishonest, or

⁴¹ Craig H. Russell, *Santiago de Murcia's 'Codice Salvidar No. 4': A Treasury of Guitar Music from Baroque Mexico*. (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1995), 12.

⁴² Russell, 16. This description of a dance that represents ‘scoundrels or ruffians’ evokes notions of the rock musician/guitarist whose jarring riffs and attitude portray a similar character in contemporary music.

⁴³ Russell, 69.

⁴⁴ Russell, 70.

offensive to pious ears”⁴⁵ have captivated audiences and inspired composers and improvisers for over 400 years. According to Alex Ross

When the *chacona* first surfaced, at the end of the sixteenth century, it promised an upending of the social order, a liberation of the body. The same outlaw spirit animates rock and pop: the swirl of a repeating bass line allows a crowd of dancing fans to forget, for a little while, the linear routines of daily life. When Frescobaldi and Bach recast the dance as a stern, inward turned form, bending it toward lament, they hinted at a different sort of freedom, that of the individual defining himself in opposition to the mass.⁴⁶

Developing a practical knowledge of these rhythms and an understanding of how they have evolved and infiltrated diverse genres is not only useful in conceptualizing a contemporary approach to improvisation it helps build the aural perception necessary to hear connecting patterns of relation between other encountered forms. As I watch a banjo player riffing along in a bluegrass band, a mariachi guitarist accompanying a singer at a wedding or a Thai *Phin* player improvising at a night market I am inspired to reach for new possibilities in my own playing. It is from this perspective that I have endeavoured to develop an improvisation methodology that embraces and integrates imaginative links between distinct styles and practices.

⁴⁵ Alex Ross, *The Rest is Noise*. (London: Fourth Estate, 2010), 24.

⁴⁶ Ross, 24.

The Lost Art of *Partimento*

New research on the practice of *partimento* has impacted upon this process in which scored material is incorporated into my method. Sanguinetti describes *partimento* as an

...alternative notational system, as opposed to today's more familiar two-stave, fully notated score; this latter system was called in Italy *intavolatura* (as the antonym of *partimento*; the term *intavolatura* has nothing to do with tablature)...*partimento* notation leaves ample space for improvisation. Indeed, unlike *intavolatura*, it needs improvisation in order to become music.⁴⁷

According to Sanguinetti, the practice of *partimento*

...allowed a global composition training – thorough bass, harmony, counterpoint... through improvisation. As a reward for a long and difficult practice, the student attained the highest degree of musical knowledge: a quasi-automatic, instinctive compositional skill, a way of composing 'through the fingers'.⁴⁸

Of particular interest here, is the role *partimento* played in helping students develop "a kind of automatic composition."⁴⁹ Virtuoso guitarist Luigi Picchianti (1786-1864), involved in a program of educational reformation in Florence in the later part of the 18th century, demonstrated how *partimento* could "function as a fundament for compositions of diverse genres, natures, characters and styles."⁵⁰ Hartdegen alludes to a potential link between Fernando Sor's (1778-1839) musical education and the practice of *partimento*. He states that,

From the start of the seventeenth century into the nineteenth century, starting in Naples, the *conservatori* for orphan boys also taught music as a craft using practical exercises to provide them with the requisite skills in *solfeggi*, the study of melodies and *partimenti*, the study of basses.⁵¹

⁴⁷ Gorgio Sanguinetti, "Thorough Bass as Music Theory", *Partimento and Continuo Playing in Theory and Practice*, - Collected Writings of the Orpheus Institute, Ed. Dirk Moelants, (Belgium: Leuven University Press, 2010), 5.

⁴⁸ Gorgio Sanguinetti, *Partimento and Continuo Playing in Theory and Practice*. 71.

⁴⁹ Sanguinetti, 6.

⁵⁰ Sanguinetti, 238.

⁵¹ Kenneth Hartdegen, "Fernando Sor's Theory of Harmony Applied to the Guitar: History, Bibliography and Context." (Doctoral diss., University of Auckland, 2011), 782.

Building on the work of Gerdinger, Hartdegen makes important historical connections between the methods of Murcia and Sanz and Sor's *Method for the Spanish Guitar*.⁵² The link to improvisation is fundamental. Hartdegen reveals that,

Partimenti provided a bass to which the student added one or more upper voices on a keyboard realization. Solfeggi provided exemplary melodic material, always in the context of a bass (and most probably a harmonic accompaniment). Thus the melody-bass duo at the heart of eighteenth-century music was taught and reinforced from both the top and the bottom. Collections of solfeggi were thus like a lexicon of stylistically favoured melodic utterance. For the future improviser, whether of whole compositions or merely ornamented reprises and cadenzas, solfeggi provided a storehouse of memorized material from which the performer or composer could later draw.⁵³

Hartdegen believes this system was, “so wide spread that it is likely to have been the way he [Sor] was taught.”⁵⁴ The *partimento* method of teaching continuo is “based not on the recognition of complicated figures, as we have been accustomed to imagine, but by learning short exemplars (or schemas) using an archetypal bass.”⁵⁵ This system gave the performer,

...a stock of exemplars that could be used in the appropriate context. In general, a keyboard player faces many more problems of mind than of hand in the initial stages of acquiring this skill and building up his stock of routines, and his ability to recognize[s] their contexts. It is in this sense that we need to read what Sor referred to as a ‘stock of positions.’⁵⁶

This permitted Sor to use,

...the basic tools of the guitar: chords, thumb on the right hand opposed to two or three fingers, and set about trying to devise the materials that he could

⁵² Fernando Sor, *Complete Method for the Spanish Guitar* Trans A. Merrick (1827). (NY: Da Capo Press, 1971).

⁵³ Robert O. Gjerdingen, *Music in the Galant Style: Being a Treatise on Various Schemata Characteristic of Eighteenth-Century Music for Courtly Chambers, Chapels, and Theatres, Including Tasteful Passages of Music Drawn from Most Excellent Chapel Master in the Employ of Noble and Noteworthy Personages, Said Music All Collected for the Reader's Delectation on the World Wide Web*. (NY: Oxford University Press), 2007.

⁵⁴ Hartdegen, 782.

⁵⁵ Hartdegen, 782.

⁵⁶ Hartdegen, 783.

substitute for exemplars in his compositions, initially functioning as *partimenti*, in this case I am referring to his minuets which he appears to have used in the working out of his system of harmony.⁵⁷

Stringed instrumentalist, guitarist and researcher Robert Mackillop offers further insight and perspective on the performance practices and methods of guitarists of the late Classical and Romanic periods arguing for a new interpretation of the methodologies of Dionisio Aguado (1874-1849) and Fernando Sor. Interestingly, in Aguado's *New Guitar Method* published in 1843 he states that, "the guitar is an instrument suited for improvisation".⁵⁸ One may infer here that the methodological imperatives underpinning Aguado's method are to develop the theoretical and practical skills necessary, not only to perform repertoire, but to compose and potentially to improvise; to become involved in the music making process. This supports the view that improvisation has been practiced in all periods of the guitar's history, perhaps excluding the first half of the twentieth century and grounds one's work in a continuum of improvisational practices; the heritage of this instrument beckons us to improvise.

Whilst my research has not focused heavily on the Classical period, like most classical guitarists my playing is informed and influenced by the repertoire of this period. The research of Rob Mackillop helps reinforce the historical links I draw upon in my own conception of guitar improvisation and inspires a growing belief that all styles and forms of music are open to interpretation through improvisation.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Hartdegen, 783.

⁵⁸ Rob MacKillop, "Some Introductory Remarks on 19th Century Performance Practice - Part II – Improvisation." (2003), <http://robmackillop.files.wordpress.com/2011/01/some-intro-pii2.pdf>. (accessed March 20, 2012).

⁵⁹ Rod Mackillop, "Video 1 - 19th Century Guitar Improv." <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l7HjKSTW8Ck> (accessed February, 13, 2014). Mackillop's online improvisation classes demonstrate insightful methods for improvising around chord sequences sourced from nineteenth century guitar repertoire.

Contemporary Perspectives

While classical guitar improvisation was paid scant attention in the early part of the twentieth century a gradual broadening of influences and perspectives began to emerge in the thinking of some practitioners in the later part of the century. Julian Bream, regarded as one of the great classical guitar masters of the twentieth-century, links his expressivity as a performer to his skill as an improviser. In a recent documentary series *My Life in Music*⁶⁰ Bream reflects on the freedom improvisation has fostered in his performances. He acknowledges that improvisation has imbued his interpretations of classical repertoire with an

...atmosphere of the here and now...just the spark that comes from hitting a note with a certain colour...giving another note an extra vibrato [by] accentuation or articulation -keep[ing] that ability to be alive to now...is a precious commodity for an artist.⁶¹

Inspired by the evocative improvisations of sitar virtuoso Ali Akbar Khan, Bream suggests, “this is the way to play music... not write all this damn stuff out.”⁶² Bream senses here the inherent creative freedom improvisation fosters in an instrumentalist. Bream also suggests that to, “some extent every performance involves elements of improvisation.”⁶³ A good performance of composed music, therefore, should allow for spontaneity. On the spectrum of improvisational practices⁶⁴, the spontaneous interpretation of ‘fixed-music’ could be seen as the mildest form of improvisation, and free or experimental practices, as the more indeterminate or abstract.⁶⁵ In my practice, both are integral to developing a personal style. As some of the materials emerging through my improvisations are developed from processes of pre-composition the spontaneous and dynamic manner in which they are interpreted aligns with the former. The method in which these materials are then integrated with more abstract, freely generated content ultimately defines my overall approach.

⁶⁰ Julian Bream, “Improvising in India (1963) with Ali Akbar Khan on Sarod” From *My Life in Music*. YouTube. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jxticeCMmPA&feature=related> (accessed April 17, 2012).

⁶¹ Julian Bream, “Improvising in India,” (accessed April 17, 2012).

⁶² Julian Bream, “Improvising in India” (accessed April 17, 2012). This seems to accord with the definition of improvisation outlined in the introduction to this chapter. (See p. 13)

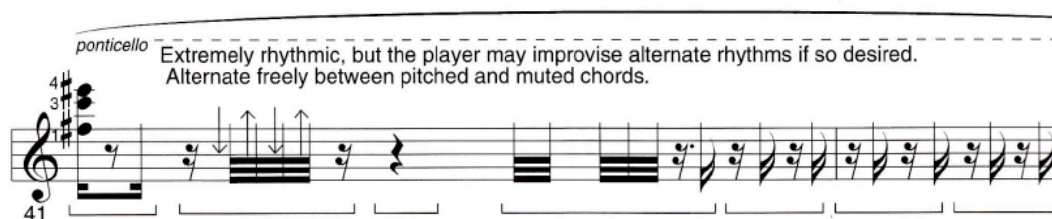
⁶³ Bream, “Improvising in India” (accessed April 17, 2012).

⁶⁴ My interpretation of the improvisation spectrum is outlined in my methodology. (See Chapter 2 pp. 48-49).

⁶⁵ In reflecting on my research I have been left with the distinct impression that a successful interpretation of a ‘fixed’ musical composition should sound improvised while a great improvisation should sound almost pre-composed.

More recently, the directive to improvise has begun to reappear in the canon of contemporary classical guitar literature. The following excerpt from “Extended Techniques” by Robert Lunn is an example of how improvisation can manifest within the contemporary repertoire.⁶⁶ This excerpt from Benjamin Verdery’s “New York, NY” requires the performer to mimic Funk style syncopated rhythms with muted chords.

Example 1.1 Muting in “New York, NY,” from *Some Towns and Cities* by Benjamin Verdery⁶⁷



The direction, if desired, to improvise through this passage demonstrates the need for improvisatory skills as an interpreter of contemporary music and is an acknowledgement by the composer that there are players that have both the comprehension and facility to improvise. The terms, ad lib., improvise, extemporise etc... are often used in specific sections of a work where an extended technique moves beyond the bounds of traditional notation to a point where it is not only an aesthetic necessity to improvise but a pragmatic choice by the composer to have their musical ideas communicated in this way. Lunn sees extended techniques as those that use non-traditional methods for producing sound.⁶⁸ His thesis refers to a diverse range of applications from the guitar repertoire and is a useful resource for composers wishing to explore this area in more depth. Within the frameworks outlined in Chapter Three, extended techniques are scored where possible, however, the nature of improvisation limits the degree to which such a task is always practical. Where possible extended techniques have been annotated or designated with verbal directives. [See Appendix F - Extended Techniques]

While developing an appreciation for the guitar’s improvisational heritage has been fundamental in framing my understanding of the practice of improvisation, the publication of new methodologies for solo guitar improvisation has offered a practical and theoretical framework for developing a personal contemporary approach that is connected to a continuum of improvisational practice.

⁶⁶ Robert Lunn, “Extended Techniques for Guitar.” (PhD diss., Ohio State University, 2010).

⁶⁷ Lunn, 14.

⁶⁸ Lunn, 1.

III. Solo Guitar Improvisation: Method and Practice

Polyphony

As classical guitar improvisation is still an emerging art form there are few proponents of the practice whose work can be assimilated in the way the work of guitarists of other idioms can be. While the reasons for this are beyond the scope of this research, the technical complexity inherent in solo playing is broadly acknowledged as an inhibiting factor in acquiring and maintaining skill as a solo improviser. In negotiating multiple musical layers the soloist is responsible for “the individual development of several musical areas or parts while simultaneously keeping an overview of the total proceedings and the overall impact.”⁶⁹ Renowned guitarist/composer and improviser Ralph Towner sees this process as analogous to drumming where,

... the division of attention is vital in keeping the time and tempo even. If you were a member of a drum ensemble, you would order your attention to hear the basic pulse foremost, then your part, and finally the ensemble sound. Your attention to each part would be simultaneous, as opposed to shifting from one part to another.⁷⁰

This research acknowledges the utility of simple exercises in developing the capacity to negotiate interlocking parameters of rhythm, melody and harmony. Example 1.2 outlines a simple method for improvising in two parts.

Example 1.2 Melodic Improvisation Over a Sustained Bass Note⁷¹

Em7(9) Am7(9)

Scale accidental for both chords

Limit yourself melodically to the available notes in this area of the neck.

① ② ③ ④ ⑤

Pattern

Em7(9) Am7(9)

Repeat ad infinitum

⁶⁹ Ralph Towner, *Improvisation and Performance Techniques for Classical and Acoustic Guitar*, (21st Century Book Productions, 1985) 34.

⁷⁰ Towner, 14.

⁷¹ Towner, 35.

Improvising content in two separate parts is a particularly challenging task for a guitarist. Anecdotally, most solo guitar improvisers (predominantly musicians from jazz and world music traditions) emerge from musical cultures that foster the development of improvisation skills in ensemble contexts. The ensemble platform establishes an aural appreciation for how different layers of sound are integrated. The chord and scale fingering outlined in example 1.2 demonstrate Towner's awareness that complexity of process requires simplification and clear directives for successful implementation in live performance. The open E and A notes in the bass make it easier to focus attention on melodic development. The directive, at the repeat sign, to "repeat *ad infinitum*"⁷² alludes to the importance of repetition in the assimilation process.

Example 1.3 is one of numerous exercises outlined in Bogdanovic's method *Counterpoint for Guitar with Improvisation in the Renaissance Style and Study in Motivic Metamorphosis*.⁷³ Using cantus firmus basslines Bogdanovic constructs a series of exercises following the intervallic rules of species counterpoint. He then extrapolates the theoretical underpinnings of this across a range of exercises for improvising in multiple parts.

Example 1.3 Counterpoint Exercises⁷⁴



The complex technical and theoretical processes underpinning contrapuntal improvisation are acknowledged by Paul Costello who states that, "it would be impractical for us to try to apply these rigorous rules when improvising".⁷⁵ Bogdanovic also recognises that the, "multitude of coordinating systems [required in counterpoint] is clearly overwhelming."⁷⁶ Despite this, Bogdanovic views the study of counterpoint as supportive of a range of contemporary syntheses. He gives weight to this argument by including in his method, a range of scales shapes based on pentatonic and modal systems, as well as a selection of exotic scales based on Indian ragas.⁷⁷

⁷² Towner, 35.

⁷³ Dusan Bogdanovic, *Counterpoint for Guitar - with Improvisation in the Renaissance Style and Study in Motivic Metamorphosis*. (Italy: Berben, 1996).

⁷⁴ Bogdanovic, *Counterpoint for Guitar*. 71.

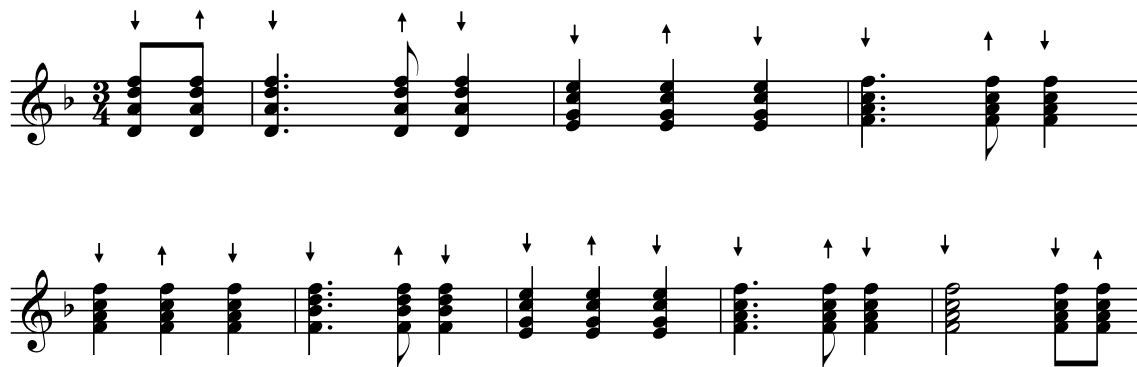
⁷⁵ Paul Costello, *Improvisation for Classical, Fingerstyle and Jazz Guitar – Creative Strategies, Techniques and Theory*. (Rothersthorpe: Paragon Publishing, 2012), 27.

⁷⁶ Bogdanovic, *Counterpoint for Guitar*. 52.

⁷⁷ Bogdanovic, *Counterpoint for Guitar*. 54

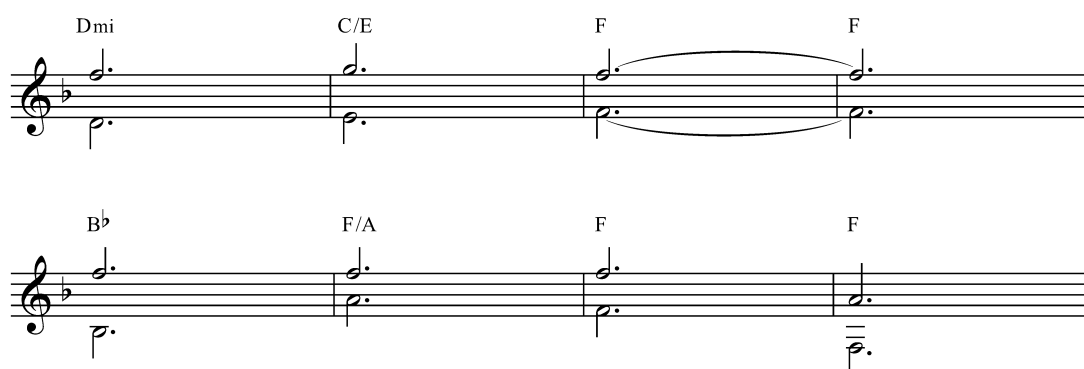
Whilst Bogdanovic's method remains an ongoing reference, my approach to contrapuntal improvisation emerges from the deconstruction of harmonic frameworks like the one outlined in Example 1.4.

Example 1.4 Excerpt from a Transcription of *Españoletas* by Santiago de Murcia⁷⁸ - Introductory Accompaniment Figure



By deconstructing these kinds of accompanimental patterns an underlying contrapuntal framework can be established. The framework outlined in Example 1.5 guided the construction of the melodic exercise shown in Example 1.6. According to Coelho this is in keeping with the ethos of the early music practitioner whose individual interpretations and variations keep instrumental traditions alive; “the player [has] to keep contributing... its about revival.”⁷⁹

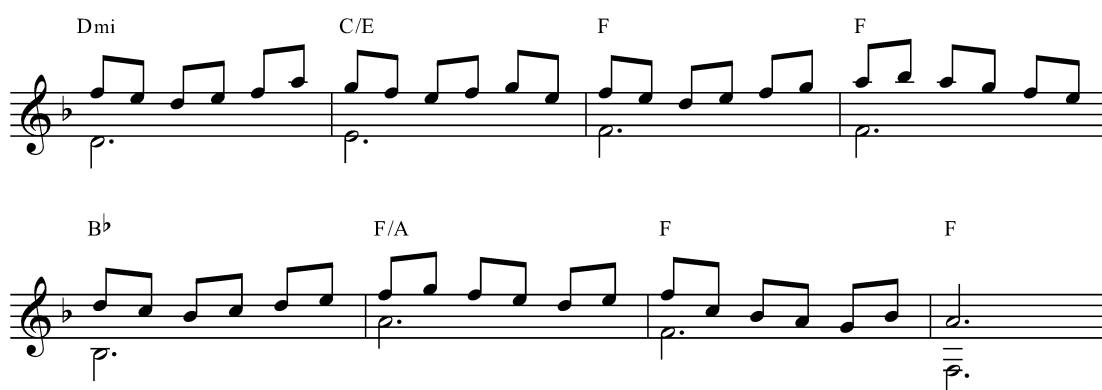
Example 1.5 *Españoletas* Deconstruction



⁷⁸ Craig H. Russell, *Santiago de Murcia's 'Codice Salvidar No. 4': A Treasury of Guitar Music from Baroque Mexico* (University of Illinois Press: Urbana & Chicago), 115.

⁷⁹ Victor Anand Coelho, “Victor Coelho Plays Nashville Lute” YouTube <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LcivyOHATwo>. (accessed May 25, 2011).

Example 1.6 Scale Development with Bass



Fingerstyle jazz guitarists, perhaps more than any genre or style of guitar playing, are well versed in the art of two-part improvisation (specifically melodic improvisation over a walking bassline).⁸⁰ Jazz pioneer Lenny Breau's famous interpretation of the Bourée in E minor from J.S. Bach's first lute suite, for example, highlights the kind of approach being referred to here.⁸¹ After an ethereal free introduction based on the harmonic structure of the Bourée, Breau plays the original work, as written, then proceeds to drift into a freestyle jazz interpretation of the same material. Breau's ability to develop melodic material over the bass line of the Bourée demonstrates, not only a rare level of skill, but represents the kind of the playful experimentalism that has inspired and informed this research.⁸²

While the study of counterpoint is an important aspect of learning how to negotiate multiple musical layers, other more spontaneous, less theoretically rigorous approaches, can also serve the textural unfolding of an improvisation. In different but related contexts, my approach to generating multiple layers of sound aligns with a broader notion of polyphony where accidental or asymmetrical conglomerations of tones emerge through a process of experimentation, juxtaposition and spontaneous amalgamation.⁸³ This process, along with conceptual and technical solutions to the inherent challenges of improvising in two parts will be discussed at greater length in Chapters Two and Three.

⁸⁰ Jimmy Wyble, "Etudes No. 2 and No. 3." YouTube.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LZNfGfSR4kQ&feature=related> (accessed July 27, 2010).

⁸¹ Lenny Breau, "The Genius of Lenny Breau - Lenny Breau - Bouree", YouTube.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=My78PblnVhU> (accessed May 10, 2011).

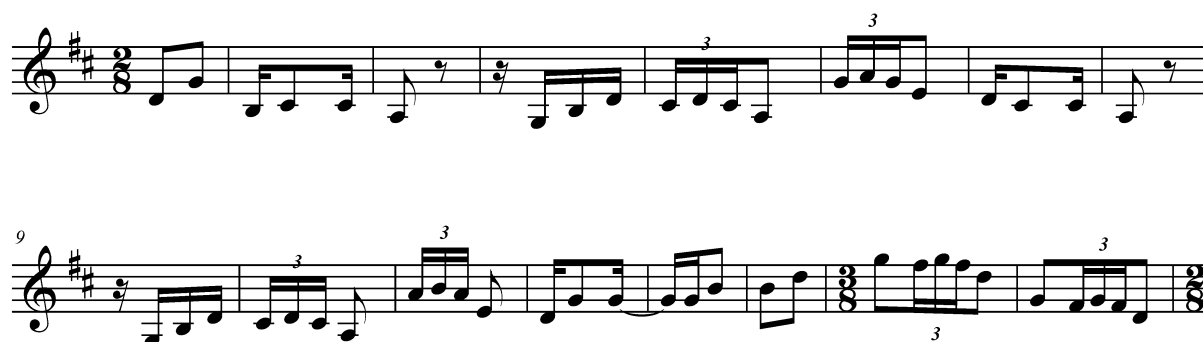
⁸² J. S. Bach, "Jesus Joy of Man's Desiring from Cantata No. 147." In *The Classical Fake Book – Over 600 Themes and Melodies in their Original Keys*. (Milwaukee: Hal-Leonard Corporation, 1992), 36. [See CD2 – Track: 5 - *Improvisation on Jesus Joy of Man's Desiring*]

⁸³ Curt Sachs, *The Wellsprings of Music*. (NY: Da Capo Press, 1962), 175. Curt Sachs identified this process in his study of diverse ethnic musics.

Unaccompanied Melodic Improvisation

While developing exercises for improvising two parts is a technical and aesthetic necessity for a soloist, neglecting the study of single-line, unaccompanied or monophonic material would, in the opinion of the author, be considered a mistake.⁸⁴ Within the solo guitar repertoire we see countless examples where unaccompanied melodic material unfolds between more harmonically dense passages. The following excerpt, from *Guitar Dances* by Ross Edwards, is one such example.

Example 1.7 Excerpt from *Guitar Dances* by Ross Edwards (1st Movement, Bars 71-95)⁸⁵



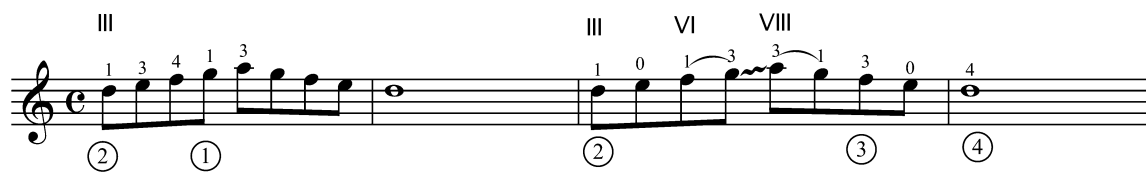
There are many similar examples where we see the exploration of unaccompanied melody across style, period and genre. Whilst the guitar is a relatively soft instrument with a narrow dynamic range, particularly when compared to the piano or violin for example, there is a tendency for composers to avoid extended unaccompanied melodic passages. Unaccompanied melodic passagework, however, offers flexibility of phrasing, timbre and variability. As a large part of my research has involved the extrapolation of melodic variations, ornamental devices and the development of *false*ta passages unaccompanied melody features prominently in my practice.

Linear, stepwise melodic development is the first and most practical step in understanding the workings of the guitar fretboard, although, not necessarily the most musical or expressive. Perhaps, if “improvisation makes its own form”⁸⁶ as Evan Parker suggests, it also creates its own technical pathways. The example below demonstrates two distinct left hand fingerings for the same material. The musical outcome is very distinctive and demonstrates the impact diverse fingering options can have on the quality and expressivity of a given musical phrase.

⁸⁴ Though the term monody generally refers to unaccompanied vocal music the freedom unaccompanied melody offers the instrumentalist equates with a form of expressive instrumental vocalization.

⁸⁵ Ross Edwards, *Guitar Dances*, arranged by Adrian Walter, (Australian Music Center, 1994).

⁸⁶ Bailey, *Improvisation - Its Nature and Practice*. 112

Example 1.8 Distinct Fingerings in Melodic Phrasing⁸⁷

The first phrase is a straightforward articulation of notes in the third position of the guitar; one note follows the other with the sound of the previous note ending when the next note is plucked. The second phrase utilises an open E before moving to higher positions with a slur and glissando slide. The example demonstrates the two dimensional nature of the instrument in that notes (E and F, for example) can be located either adjacently in the first fingering or at relatively large distances apart, as in the second fingering.⁸⁸ While this relates to the technical functionality of the instrument there are aesthetic factors to consider also. The E, played on the first string, may continue ringing over the other notes (a sustained note in this context is generally implied by the fingering) creating a harp-like sound. This highlights how different approaches to scalar development can generate or trigger distinct stylistic gestures. (See Appendix A – Scale Shapes, p. 124)

Chord Scales

One of the most practical and widely utilised techniques for incorporating melodic material into solo improvisations is through the interpolation of melodic runs between strummed, plucked or arpeggiated chordal passages. An example of this can be seen in a performance of *Nardis* by Ralph Towner.⁸⁹ Improvisational materials manifest in a jazz-style theme and variations with extended vamps and interpolated melodic runs. The transcribed excerpt below is indicative of the process.

Example 1.9 Towner Unaccompanied Melodic Run⁹⁰

⁸⁷ Ronald Jerone Sherrod, “A Guide to the Fingering of Music for Guitar”, Doctoral diss. (DMA, University of Arizona School of Music, 1981).

⁸⁸ Glen Hodges, "The Analysis of Jazz Improvisational Language and Its Use in Generating New Composition and Improvisation" 22.

⁸⁹ Ralph Towner, "Ralph Towner - Nardis" Youtube. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7b3ioveZK9k> (accessed March 21, 2011).

⁹⁰ Towner, “Nardis” Youtube. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7b3ioveZK9k> (accessed March 21, 2011).

Example 1.10 demonstrates Towner's method. Using the harmony from his composition *Serenade*⁹¹ as a framework Towner outlines a series of interlocking scale patterns to guide the technical application of improvised melodic material between specified chord shapes.

The 'Finger Exercises' section contains four exercises, each 16 measures long, with specific fingering and articulation markings:

- Exercise 1:** G#m+7 (IV-). Measures 1-8: G#4, A4, B4, C#5, B4, A4, G#4, F#4. Measures 9-16: G#4, A4, B4, C#5, B4, A4, G#4, F#4. Fingering: 3, 4, 3, 4, 3, 3, 4, 3, 2, 4, 3. Articulation: ①, ②, ③.
- Exercise 2:** Amaj7+4/C# (IV-). Measures 1-8: A4, B4, C#5, D5, C#5, B4, A4, G#4. Measures 9-16: A4, B4, C#5, D5, C#5, B4, A4, G#4. Fingering: 4, 2, 4, 2, 3, 4, 3. Articulation: ①, ②, ③.
- Exercise 3:** Dmaj+4/F# (II-). Measures 1-8: D4, E4, F#4, G#4, F#4, E4, D4, C#4. Measures 9-16: D4, E4, F#4, G#4, F#4, E4, D4, C#4. Fingering: 4, 3, 4, 2, 3. Articulation: ①, ②.
- Exercise 4:** Gmaj+4/B (II-). Measures 1-8: G4, A4, B4, C#5, B4, A4, G4, F#4. Measures 9-16: G4, A4, B4, C#5, B4, A4, G4, F#4. Fingering: 4, 2, 4, 2, 3, 4. Articulation: ①, ②.

These melodic phrases, commonly referred to as *falsetas* in *flamenco* music, are melodic passages whose origins lie in the plucked string practices of the Renaissance and Baroque periods. Koster describes *falsetas* as, “brief melodic interludes... variations inspired by the rhythms of the *baile* and the melodies of the *cante*.”⁹³ To a large extent the reputation of the *flamenco* guitarist rests on their ability to create interesting and original *falseta* passages, with scalar variation being one component in this process. The technical complexity of the practice dictates that these melodic fragments often “constitute the only predetermined material used.”⁹⁴ Although the melodic passage depicted in Example 1.11 represents this process unfolding in a distinct *flamenco* context the overall concept is applicable across styles.

The second system of the musical score for 'The Rose Tree' consists of two staves. The upper staff continues the melody from the first system, featuring a series of eighth notes and a final measure with a whole note chord labeled 'A7 (La)'. The lower staff continues the accompaniment, starting with a quarter rest followed by eighth notes and a final measure with a whole note chord. The key signature remains one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4.

⁹¹ Towner, *Improvisation and Performance Techniques for Classical and Acoustic Guitar*. 48.

While the process should highlight the significance of developing an integrated system of scale and chord shapes most methods continue to separate scale and chord systems. Although Towner's approach is by no means comprehensive, it is insightful in so far as it integrates harmonic and melodic material within a well-defined pedagogical framework.

Scale Systems

Guitarists across styles are familiar with different scale systems in guiding the suitable fingering of melodic passages across the fingerboard. One popular approach for improvisers, referred to as the 'CAGED system' (a series of scale shapes generated by dividing the guitar fretboard into separate shapes), establishes a framework for learning an almost infinite range of scales and modes in all keys across all parts of the fretboard.⁹⁶ Whilst the origins of the system are uncertain there is ample evidence to suggest guitarists have been grappling with various 'CAGED-like' systems for some time. Sor, in his *Complete Method* (1827), for example, makes the important connection between easily transposable interlocking chord and scale shapes. The excerpt in Example 1.12 demonstrates how the C chord and corresponding scale shape are transposed up the fretboard by a semitone.

Example 1.12 Sor Scale Shapes⁹⁷

Ex: 50. Treble clef, C major scale shape. Fingers: 0, 2, 4, 3^d, 2^d, 1st. Strings: 4th, 3^d, 2^d, 1st.

Ex: 51. Treble clef, D major scale shape. Fingers: 4, 5, 1, 3, 4, 1, 3, 1, 2, 4, 1st. Strings: 4th, 3^d, 2^d, 1st.

Ex: 52. Treble clef, E major scale shape. Fingers: 0, 1, 3, 0, 1, 0, 1, 2, 0, 1, 2, 4. Strings: 4th, 3^d, 2^d, 1st.

Sor reflected on the process underpinning his method for scale development in the follow extract;

If the scale were a semitone higher [D major], the act of barring being nothing else than making a fret, against which the first finger presses the strings serve as a nut, I

⁹⁶ While the origins of the system are unclear it is ubiquitous, particularly among jazz guitarists. Increasing usage of the system by classical guitarists is testimony to the functionality of the system in providing easy access, across the fretboard, to modes in all keys. (See Appendix A – Scale Shapes)

⁹⁷ The omission of the Gb in Ex. 51 would appear to be an error.

consider that I only have three fingers remaining disposable; and the major sixth, A flat and E, (which this nut enables me to produce) serving for the chord, I finger for the minor sixth, F D flat, 2/3 instead of 1/2... the fingering for the chord once determined, the fingering for the scale becomes perfectly natural, and will serve me semitone to semitone throughout the whole length of the fingerboard...⁹⁸

Sor's methodological thinking is part of a continuum of practices that dates, at least, back to Juan Carlos Amat.⁹⁹ While the practice of linking chord shapes with corresponding scale shapes in classical guitar method books began to fade throughout twentieth century it has remained a fundamental concept in jazz guitar methods. Bogdanovic's scale system, a distillation of the principles outlined in William Leavitt's *Modern Method for Guitar*,¹⁰⁰ aligns with aspects of my own approach and is regarded as standard practice for many guitar improvisers. (See Appendix A – Scale Shapes, p. 124)

Example 1.13. Bogdanovic Scale Shapes¹⁰¹

4

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>F# major position I - basic (i)</p> | <p>F# major position III - 1st ext. (ii)</p> |
| <p>F# major position II - 4th ext. (iii)</p> | <p>e minor harmonic position II - 4th ext. (iv)</p> |
| <p>F# pentatonic - Dhām position II - basic (v)</p> | <p>F# pentatonic - Khamāj position II - 4th ext. (vi)</p> |

⁹⁸ Fernando Sor, *Complete Method for the Spanish Guitar Trans A. Merrick (1827)*. (NY: Da Capo Press, 1971), 29.

⁹⁹ Juan Carlos Amat, *Guitarra Española y Vandola*. (Monaco: Chantrell SA, 1980).

¹⁰⁰ William Leavitt, *A Modern Method for Guitar – Vol II and III*. (Berklee Press Publications, 1971).

¹⁰¹ The pedagogical intent here is to develop transposable scale patterns that cover all areas of the fretboard. The manner in which improvised melodic material is developed from these shapes is implied but not specified.

Towner implies scale shapes, in a manner similar to CAGED system, by specifying the left hand fingering to be used for specific exercises. (See Example 1.10, p. 23) While my approach utilises an amalgam of CAGED and open-string scale systems I have also followed Towner's lead and outlined fingering options, where it is deemed necessary, for pre-composed melodic passages, variations and ornaments. The perceived benefits and limitations of CAGED-like scale systems are outlined here:

Benefits:

1. They increase knowledge of the guitar fretboard.
2. They offer easily transposable shapes.
3. They link to common chord shapes in the same general position of the fingerboard.
4. They can be adapted for other purposes and process.

Limitations:

1. They do not account for the harp-like scalar development fingerstyle technique permits.
2. They do not account for the fingerstyle guitarist's need to incorporate open strings and scales in the open position in order to free up the left hand for contrapuntal or supportive bass notes.
3. They do not necessarily suit specific expressive, dynamic and technical outcomes.

By experimenting with different approaches new pathways and creative solutions to these perceived limitations have emerged; they are referred to throughout Chapters Two and Three. (See Appendix A – Scale Shapes, p. 124)

Harmony and Chord Shapes

The preeminent role the guitar plays as an accompaniment instrument impacts the evolution of harmony and style and influences the kinds of chord shapes that emerge, not only in the canon of repertoire, but throughout instructional methods. Examining chordal links between *flamenco*, jazz, Celtic, rock, pop, African and Brazilian guitar-based genres reinforced my passion for establishing an approach to improvisation firmly embedded in the practice of riffing or jamming around continuo frameworks across styles. An important part of this research, therefore, has involved the exploration of diverse systems of fretboard harmony, particularly those conducive to application and integration of a wide variety of patterns for strumming and arpeggiation.

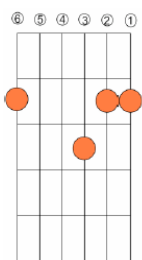
Insightful strategies for chordal shape recognition continue to permeate the literature. Jeffery McFadden stresses that

Recognition of left-hand chord forms helps to group notes together in packages, an approach which reflects the cognitive process of ‘chunking.’ This chunking, intuition would suggest, creates movement groupings, and among other benefits, assists in the memorization of pieces.¹⁰²

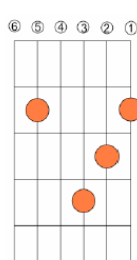
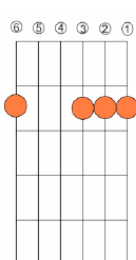
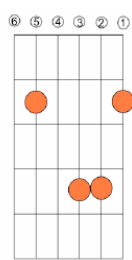
MacFadden’s study is a useful template for systemizing improvisational studies around commonly used shapes and sequences. Example 1.14 demonstrated how major chords shapes are transformed into minor chord shapes through a simple fingering adjustment.

Example 1.14 Root Position Triads in Four Voices¹⁰³

a) Major



b) Minor



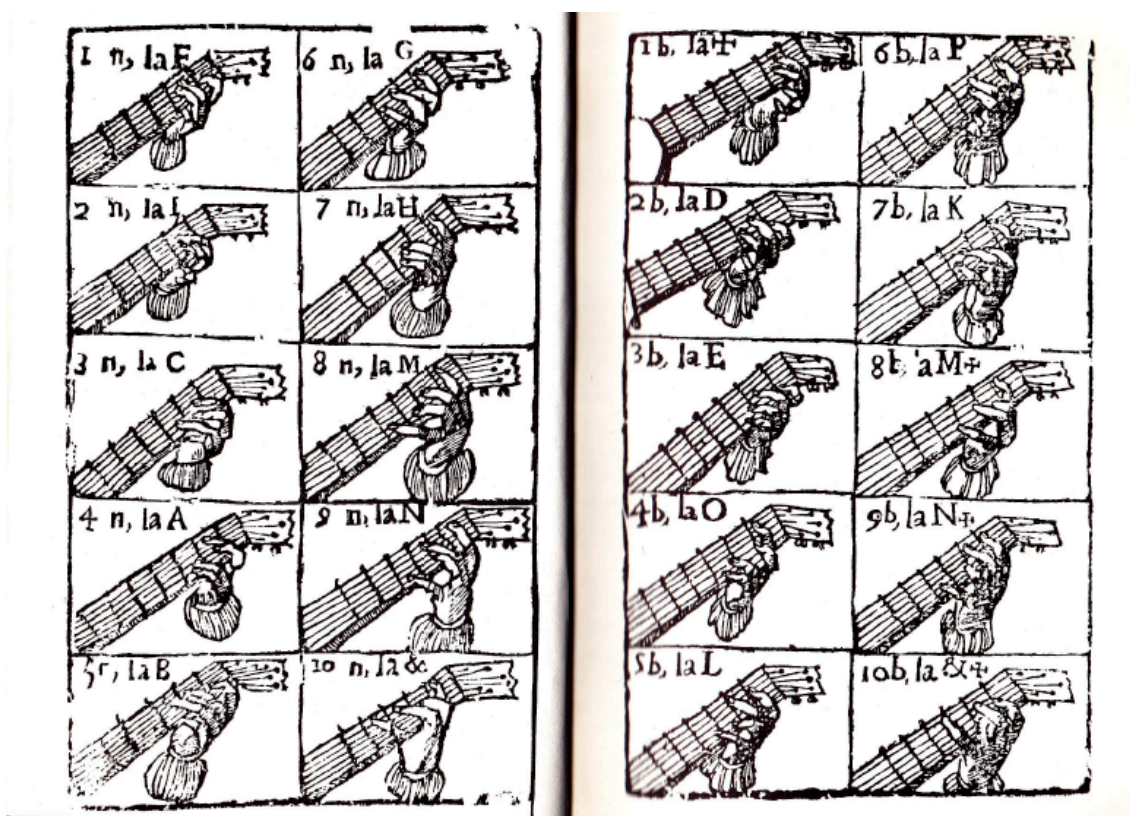
¹⁰² Jeffery James McFadden, “Fretboard Harmony for University Study: Method and Historical Context,” (Doctoral diss., University of Toronto), 2010, 2.

¹⁰³ Jeffery James McFadden, “Fretboard Harmony for University Study: Method and Historical Context,” 120

The genesis of these kinds of methods can be found in the Spanish Baroque guitar literature.¹⁰⁴

Example 1.15, from Amat's 1596 method *Guitarra Espanola y Vandola*¹⁰⁵ is "probably the earliest account of how to play the five course guitar in the *rasgueado*, or strummed style to have appeared in print."¹⁰⁶ According to Russel, Amat's treatise, "underscores the dominance of harmony over melody, since his treatise delves into the chord fingerings and harmonic progressions the plucking of individual notes is never made an issue."¹⁰⁷

Example 1.15 Diagram of Chord Shapes, "The Guitarra Espanola y Vandola", Juan Carlos Amat¹⁰⁸



These strategies emerged alongside other important methodological developments such as 'the musical circle' or 'musical labyrinth' (a precursor to the modern circle of fifths), devised to help guitarists modulate the popular dance pieces of the time through all twelve keys.¹⁰⁹ While this may

¹⁰⁴ The methods I am referring to here are those, such as Amat's, that use pictorial diagrams to assist chordshape recognition.

¹⁰⁵ Juan Carlos Amat, *Guitarra Española y Vandola*. (Monaco: Chantrell SA, 1980).

¹⁰⁶ Monica Hall, "Introduction," In *Guitarra Española y Vandola*. (Monaco: Chantrell SA, 1980), NP.

¹⁰⁷ Craig H. Russell, "Radical Innovations, social revolution and the baroque guitar," In *The Cambridge Companion to the Guitar*. The *Companion to the Guitar* would be an essential text if ever a tertiary guitar curriculum incorporated the compulsory study of guitar history.

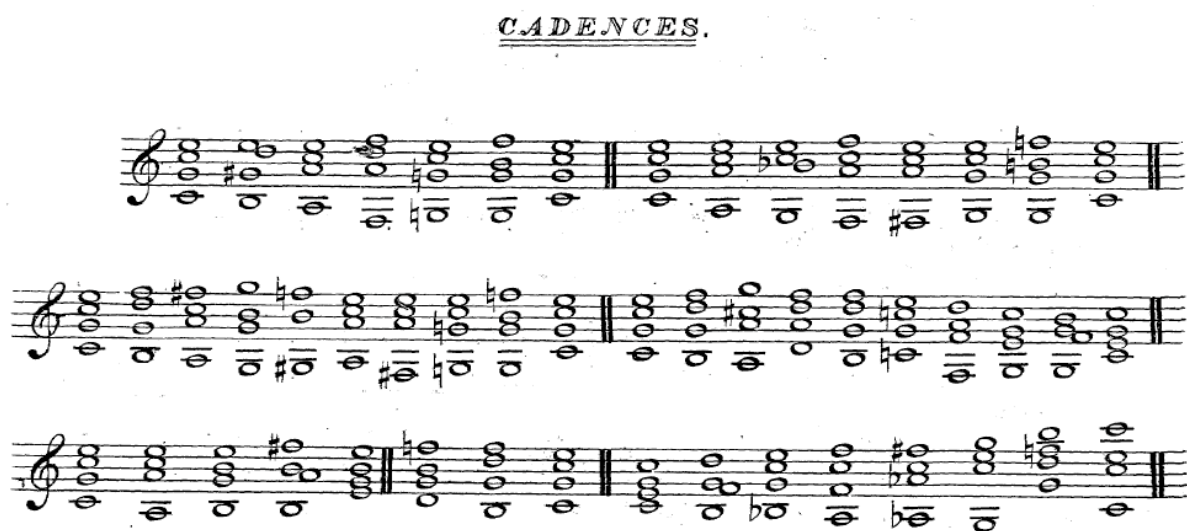
¹⁰⁸ Amat, 44-45.

¹⁰⁹ Many jazz aficionados may find this fascinating given the nature of contemporary jazz pedagogy. The idea of riffing over chord progressions through different keys continues today to be a powerful methodological tool for music making across styles and is fundamental to my approach.

seem extreme it would not have been overwhelming given the simplicity of the four-chord progressions that formed the foundation of the popular dances of the time.¹¹⁰

These methodological experiments placed the Spanish “in the forefront of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century theory”¹¹¹ and established the foundation from which important methodological developments emerged during the nineteenth-century. The excerpt from Horetzky’s *Preludes and Cadences*¹¹² depicted in Example 1.16 is an example of a different approach to delineating chords.

Example 1.16 Horetzky Cadences¹¹³



This approach, where four voices align with the four fingers of the right hand, is ideal for application to the kinds of block chords and arpeggios that permeate, not only nineteenth-century repertoire, but much of the contemporary canon also. While chord shapes like those outlined by Amat link to a distinct process of systemization and memorization, notational approaches offer a different kind of compositional and theoretical insight.

¹¹⁰ James Tyler, *A Guide to Playing Baroque Guitar*. (IN: Indiana University Press, 2011). Tyler’s book is an insightful method in the art of playing Baroque guitar. One of the main benefits of a contemporary method such as this is that condenses a range of techniques and concepts, garnered from a tradition which spans several centuries, into a coherent and accessible guide to Baroque guitar performance practice. As this project is not centered solely in a study of early music this compilation facilitates a general understanding and absorption of the most relevant techniques being applied in my methodology.

¹¹¹ Craig Russell, “Radical Innovations, social revolution and the baroque guitar.” 124.

¹¹² F. Horetzky, *Preludes, Cadences and Modulations in Every Key for the Guitar*. (London: Meltzer & Son, ca. 1830), 5.

¹¹³ F. Horetzky, *Preludes, Cadences and Modulations in Every Key for the Guitar*. (London: Meltzer & Son, ca. 1830).

Towner's approach, whilst it utilizes contemporary jazz-based harmonic sequences, functions in a similar way to the Horetzky cadences. While the link to improvisation is potentially implied by Horetzky's *Preludes and Cadences*, Towner is specific in the design of his exercises. In the exercise outlined in Example 1.17 the student is directed to apply right hand patterns to the outlined sequence.¹¹⁴ The important contribution Towner makes, both as a player and through his instructional method, is that he offers a conceptual framework for reinterpreting other methodologies, materials and repertoire through processes of improvisation.

Example 1.17 Towner Chord Sequence¹¹⁵

Use 4/4, 3/4 or 12/8 meter.

Bm7(13) Bm7(13)/A G#7(-13) G#7(-13)/+9 C#m7(9) D7sus4 Gmaj7+5 Em7(11)

Cmaj7(9) C#7(-9) C#m7-5/F# F#7-9 Bmaj(11) Gmaj(11)/A G#m(11) Gmaj(+9)

Emaj/F# Em/F# Emaj/F# Em/F# Bmaj(11)

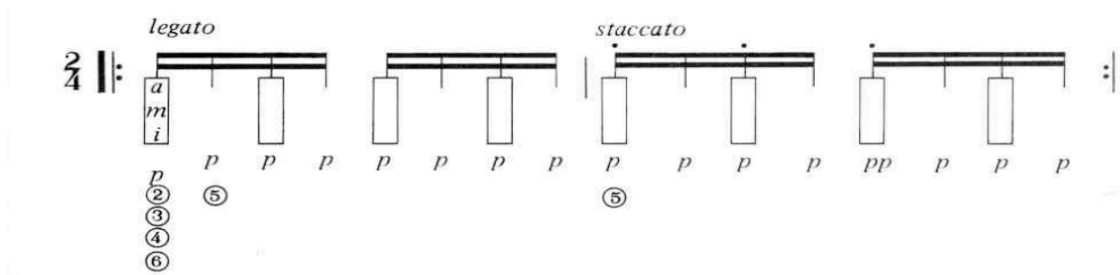
In tracing developments from the Spanish Baroque through to the nineteenth century I began to conceive of an interlocking approach developed from an amalgam of both chord charts and traditional notational delineation. Though this process is ongoing, the charts outlined in Appendix C (p. 132) point to the systemization of shapes in contrast to the whole note sequences that were incorporated in my improvisation frameworks. An integrated approach assists in the generation and memorization of shapes through notation while simultaneously augmenting and strengthening the overall 'chunking' process.

¹¹⁴ Bruce Arnold, *Chord Workbook for Guitar Volume Two*. (NY: Muse Eek Publishing, 2007). This book outlines an extensive range of colourful contemporary chord voicings for jazz guitar. While many of the chord shapes are designed for application to the electric guitar and are technically impractical on the classical guitar they can function when transposed to lower positions on the fretboard.

¹¹⁵ Towner, *Improvisation for Jazz and Fingerstyle Guitar*. 22. The widespread contemporary usage of enharmonic spelling to delineated harmonic sequences (a term commonly used by improvisers when referring to chord progressions) is common across many genres and remains an effective way of naming and memorizing a diverse range of chordal textures.

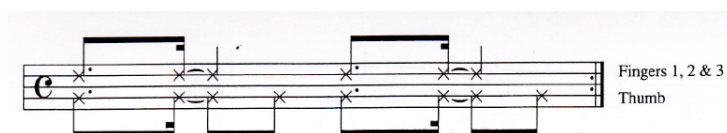
Example 1.18 demonstrates another useful conceptual tool devised by Towner, highlighting the importance of developing a visual image of a particular right hand pattern that can be applied to a diverse range of chord shapes. The addition of dynamic markings here reveals his attention to expressivity in structuring these exercises.

Example 1.18 Conceptualising Right Hand Fingering Patterns¹¹⁶

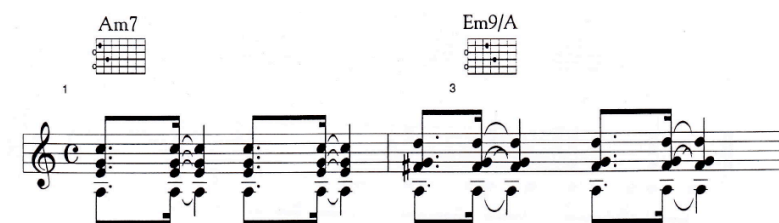


In taking this a step further I have integrated a range of distinct stylistic applications from instructional methods as well as through compositional processes of transcription, adaptation and imitation. Example 1.19, from *The Brazilian Guitar Book*,¹¹⁷ demonstrates the Baião rhythm (Brazilian folk rhythm) followed by an application to specified chord shapes; the right hand fingering is implied. This exemplifies the process I have used in developing arpeggios techniques, strumming patterns, vamps and riffs. [See Appendix D – Rhythms, Accompaniment Patterns and Ornamental Arpeggiation, p. 139]

Example 1.19 Brazilian Baião Rhythm¹¹⁸



Guitar Application



¹¹⁶ Ralph Towner, *Improvisation and Performance Techniques for Classical and Acoustic Guitar*. 24. The use of the letter *p* refers to the thumb of the right hand not the dynamic marking *pianissimo*. The *pp* under the last beat of the bar is interpreted as an error.

¹¹⁷ Nelson Faria, *The Brazilian Guitar Book*. (CA: Sher Music Co., 1995).

¹¹⁸ Faria, 121.

Improvisational Strategies

Processes of variation, imitation and ornamentation, comprise a large part of the improvisatory practices seen throughout the history of Western Classical music. Many of these practices have filtered through to, and merged with, many of the guitar styles and musics explored in this research. The prescribed or implied strictures underpinning Spanish Baroque, *flamenco* or Brazilian guitar styles, for example, guides the kinds of techniques employed. The key improvisational strategies incorporated in this study include:

1. Improvisation Frameworks
2. Variation
3. Ornamentation
4. Imitation
5. Syncretism

Improvisation Frameworks

In my practice, the term ‘improvisation framework’ refers to an underlying musical structure that takes the form of a skeletal score containing the referent materials upon which a given improvisation is developed. The ‘improvisation framework’ can serve several purposes. It can guide musical gesture, allow space for improvisation, earmark sections of prescribed material for variation and development or outline verbal directives to the performer. In this sense, the framework is the foundation upon which strategies of variation and development promulgate improvisational activity. Radaï states that, “the application of frameworks in various ways constitute an arsenal of possibilities for the improviser.”¹¹⁹ Anything we can hear, see or remember can also serve as a conceptual framework for an improvisation. A musician busking the blues on the street, ruminations on a recent concert experience as well as delineated materials from a chart, a bassline or chord sequence, can provide creative stimuli for a range of improvisatory responses. A verbal prompt such as, ‘Spanish-style in the phrygian mode’ can guide an improvisation.¹²⁰ The chart depicted in 1.20 is an extension of the standard single stave chart.

¹¹⁹ G. Radaï, “Strategies for Improvisation.”

<http://webzoom.freewebs.com/lowendr/Strategies%20for%20Improvisation.pdf>. (Accessed March 7, 2014), 2.

¹²⁰ Paul Costello, *Improvisation for Classical Fingerstyle and Jazz Guitar – Creative Strategies, Technique and Theory*. (Rothersthorpe: Paragon Publishing, 2012), 91.

INNOCENTI

Ralph Towner/Gary Burton

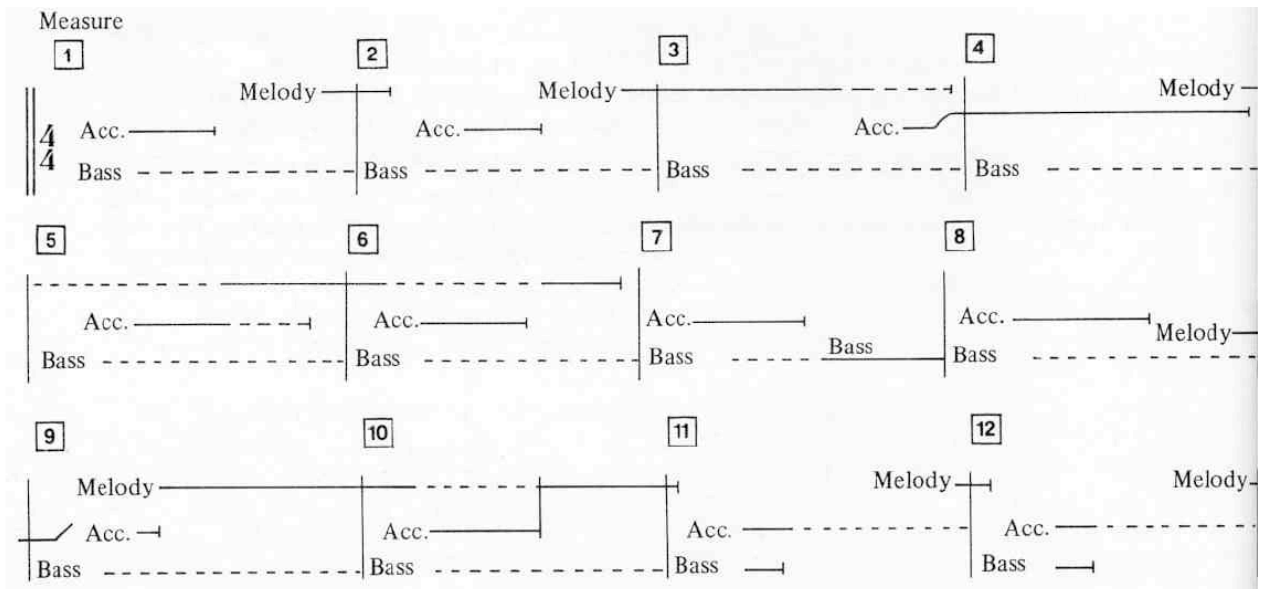
The musical score for 'Innocenti' is presented in three systems, each with a treble and bass staff. The first system begins with an 'Intro' section, followed by 'Em9' and 'Cmaj7+4' chords. The second system continues with 'Em9' and 'Cmaj7+4' chords, and includes a section labeled 'Accomp.' and 'Solo'. The third system features 'Fmaj7+4' and 'Em9' chords. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and fingerings, as well as chord symbols and figured bass numbers.

By including a staff outlining chord options Towner augments the pedagogical process and moves beyond the normal chart where chords are realized solely from chord symbols or figured bass numbers.¹²² The interlocking parameters of frameworks like this help reduce and simplify choices, giving theoretical, musical and stylistic directives which ultimately guide the shape and style of an ensuing improvisation. The referent materials contained within the framework provide the vehicle whereby one can re-interpret and integrate diverse compositional processes in real-time to form an individual repertoire of skills and techniques that impact upon and shape style and content. The graphic depiction in Example 1.21 outlines the multiple layers of a transcribed improvisation (See Example 1.22) unfolding over the course of twelve bars. This kind of map is a useful conceptual tool for separating the technical parameters of a given improvisation.

¹²¹ Ralph Towner, *Improvisation and Performance Techniques for Classical and Acoustic Guitar*. 40.

¹²² Towner, 40.

Example 1.21 Integrating Materials – Towner Conceptual Map¹²³



The bass part in example 1.22 is maintained on open strings to simplify the integration of the different musical layers. If, as Towner states, “the potential for variation is established in the first few events of your music,”¹²⁴ we can understand how intelligently designed frameworks might assist this process.

Example 1.22 Proportioning Elements - Towner Exercise¹²⁵



¹²³ Ralph Towner, *Improvisation and Performance Techniques for Classical and Acoustic Guitar*. 36.

¹²⁴ Towner, 6.

¹²⁵ Towner, 38.

While these exercises reflect Towner's unique compositional style and musical taste they also offer a methodological platform from which a range of distinct practices and strategies can be developed. What I have gleaned from Towner's approach, overall, is that the 'improvisation framework' is fundamental to the coalescence of compositional intention and improvisational discovery.¹²⁶ In developing my own frameworks I chose materials and forms that were not only indicative of my personal style and taste but connected my work to a continuum of improvisational practices that date back to the Spanish Baroque. The kinds of improvisational strategies that were then applied to the referent material outlined in my frameworks morphed between instinctual auditory and tactile responses to the material and more technically and theoretically defined mechanisms of variation, ornamentation, imitation and syncretism.

Variation

Most musical genres that foster improvisatory practices incorporate strategies and techniques for variation. Variation can manifest at the level of content and form and can be broadly understood, "as a process in which one or more segments of a composition [or improvisation] are modifications of the initial section of the piece."¹²⁷

On this subject Bogdanovic states that,

The variation form is synonymous with improvisation. In both the Renaissance and Baroque eras, improvisation was an integral part of the creative processes, and a performer of that period was expected to improvise various types of forms, including variations on either ground or figured bass.¹²⁸

The theme in Example 1.23 enters after the strumming patterned previously outlined in Example 1.4. The first variation seen in Example 1.24 demonstrates how Murcia develops the contour of the melody maintaining harmonic continuity with the opening pattern.

¹²⁶ Ralph Towner, Ralph Towner, *Improvisation and Performance Techniques for Classical and Acoustic Guitar*. 37.

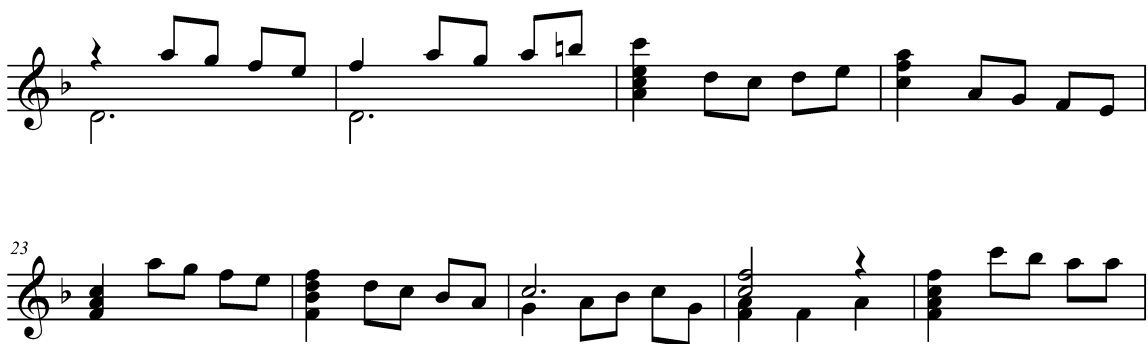
¹²⁷ Ronald Byrnsie, "The Performer as Creator – Jazz Improvisation." In *Contemporary Music and Music Cultures*. Ed. Bruno Nettle, (NJ: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1975), 224.

¹²⁸ Bogdanovic, *Counterpoint for Guitar*. 77.

Example 1.23 Theme from *Españoletas* by Santiago de Murcia (excerpt)¹²⁹



Example 1.24 Variation I from *Españoletas* (excerpt) by Santiago de Murcia



A distinction needs to be made between the concept of variation as it relates to the overall form of an improvised work and the notion of varying materials through specific compositional or technical processes of alteration. While the two are inextricably linked there is an important difference. The former relates to form (i.e. the elaboration of an underlying chordal framework) and the latter relates to motivic development within the form. At the motivic level, Bogdanovic sees variation as consisting of a, “sequence of varied motifs chosen from a limited number of variants defining a particular language (style).”¹³⁰ He outlines the various theoretical processes underpinning certain variation techniques such as ‘splitting’, a process which “consists of dividing up the total duration of a given sound into shorter values.”¹³¹

As the variation of accompaniment passages and chord sequences was fundamental to my approach much of my practice comprised the development of distinct technical permutations of

¹²⁹ Santiago de Murcia, “Españoletas.” In. ‘*Codice Salvidar No. 4: A Treasury of Guitar Music from Baroque Mexico*. (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1995), 115.

¹³⁰ Dusan Bogdanovic, *Counterpoint for Guitar*. 101.

¹³¹ Dusan Bogdanovic, *Counterpoint for Guitar*. 106. The concept of ‘splitting’ is understood to be derived from the Renaissance practice of diminution.

predetermined arpeggio figures. Example 1.25 demonstrates how Towner understands this process. Exercises such as these reflect similar strategies deployed in my own practice. (See Appendix D – Rhythms, Accompaniment Patterns and Ornamental Arpeggios, p. 139)

Example 1.25 Towner Arpeggio Variations¹³²

Variation 1

Variation 2

Variation 3

The form of the improvised work, determined in my practice by the kind of framework employed to integrate delineated materials, required an understanding of the way variation unfolded in the musical style chosen for the improvisation. In *flamenco* guitar playing, for example, variation manifests at multiple levels but often features most prominently in the rhythmic augmentation or diminution of *compas* sequences and *falsetas* passages rather than through a process of motivic development. In many respects the nature of improvisation in *flamenco* guitar is a process of compositional embellishment with form being varied in performance. Bailey's research highlights the variable sequence length in *flamenco* guitar improvisation, noting that the

...harmony changes when the vocal or instrumental embellishments on that chord are completed. Improvisation is in relation to this harmonic vocabulary, and in relation to the *falsetas*, or melodic fragments which constitute the only predetermined material used (although the exact placement or phrasing of the *falsetas* is never fixed).¹³³

¹³² Ralph Towner, *Improvisation and Performance Techniques for Classical and Fingerstyle Guitar*. 16.

¹³³ Derek Bailey, *Improvisation - Its Nature and Practice*. 14.

In contrast developing an improvisation from a specified chart or through a traditional theme and variations form requires the application of a distinct range of appropriate technical and theoretical skill-sets. The approach to variation explored in this research has morphed between the instinctual and theoretical variation of broadly sourced materials. More specific information on how this process has impacted upon my practice is outlined in Chapters Two and Three.

Ornamentation

Ornamentation is defined by Ronald Byrnside as “variational processes that operate on a smaller, more localized level”¹³⁴ than thematic variation. The ornamental manipulation or adjustment of melody and harmony is fundamental to the dynamic and expressive unfolding of music across genres. In Francisco Gueráu’s *Poema harmonico* (1694) ornaments are referred to as the, “heart and soul of the music.”¹³⁵ Tyler attributes the expressive potential of the slurred ornament in Baroque guitar playing to the technical underpinnings of the practice; “as the first note of the slur is plucked, it is naturally stronger than the others, which can result in some ear-catching rhythmic stresses throughout the passage.”¹³⁶ My approach to ornamentation emerges through an intuitive amalgam of standard techniques (trills, mordents and appoggiaturas) supplemented by a series of newly devised ornamental techniques that emerged through processes of improvisation and imitation.

Though many classical guitarists are familiar with strumming patterns and *rasgueado* techniques of one variety or another understanding this as a functioning of ornamental procedures, may be less common. In the Spanish Baroque ornaments were referred to as *habilidades* or *afectos*.¹³⁷ They were applied, not only to melodic materials, but also to chords, in the form of ornamental strumming and *arpeggiation*.¹³⁸ Baroque guitar strumming techniques were augmented through a process of rhythmic ornamentation using the *trillo* (down and up strokes with the index finger of the right hand) and *repico* techniques, a more complex rhythmic ornamentation incorporating up-strokes with the thumb.¹³⁹

¹³⁴ Ronald Byrnside, “The Performer as Creator – Jazz Improvisation,” 225.

¹³⁵ Craig H. Russel, “The Baroque Guitar.” In. *The Cambridge Companion to the Guitar*. 159.

¹³⁶ James Tyler, *A Guide to Playing the Baroque Guitar*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011), 13.

¹³⁷ Tyler, 18.

¹³⁸ Tyler, 18.

¹³⁹ Tyler, 14.

Tyler states that while,

Most players today equate the Spanish term for it, *ragueado*, with flamenco guitar... the two are very different, mainly because the high-tension stringing of the modern instrument demands a somewhat aggressive right-hand fingering style, while the much lower tension stringing of the baroque instrument encourage a more delicate approach.¹⁴⁰

Understanding strumming as a mode of ornamentation impacted the way I incorporated the practice in my improvisations. Rather than merely stating or reinforcing a rhythmic pulse the strum, the *rasgueado*, when viewed as an ornamental flourish could be integrated in diverse ways to spontaneously accentuate a phrase or cadential sequence. The Spanish Baroque guitar practice of ornamental *arpeggiation* also offered a new way of conceiving the process and application of *arpeggiation* techniques in my practice.

Tyler outlines the process, stating that

The arpeggio, like vibrato, was regarded as an ornament in the Baroque period. Its sign, -/- or :/: found under a chord (be it in *alfabeto* notation or fully written out) and below the staff, indicated that the chord should be broken up into individual notes, sometimes in a quite elaborate manner.¹⁴¹

While this study has involved an extensive exploration of diverse strumming and accompaniment patterns the primary shift in awareness to emerge through this research came from an acknowledgement that these patterns can have an ornamental capacity. This augmented my overall conception of strumming and impacted the way in which these were integrated into my improvisations.

¹⁴⁰ Tyler, 18.

¹⁴¹ James Tyler, *A Guide to Playing Baroque Guitar*. (Indiana University Press, 2011), 14.

Imitation

Like variation, imitation can take on multiple meanings depending on context. In Renaissance counterpoint, for example, “imitation was the cornerstone of structural concretion.”¹⁴² While imitation refers to a compositional process generally involving the repetition or transposition of specified material the term can also apply to the broader process of copying or imitating a diverse range of musical characteristics. These may include dynamics, melodic contour, rhythm and even feeling. Imitation as a form of copying is fundamental to most improvisational practices. In the jazz, folk and contemporary music context imitation is fundamentally the way one learns to play and improvise.¹⁴³ Understanding that imitation can emerge through distinct yet related processes, that is, as a structural compositional tool and as part of an aural process of assimilation and development was important in discerning what was occurring in my own improvisational practice.

An illustration of this is reflected in my attempt to imitate West African *kora* (African harp) ornamentation, a practice known as *birimintingo*,¹⁴⁴ through the development of a new technique I have subsequently referred to as *kora*-style ornamentation. The development of this technique, like many that emerged through the exploration of diverse encountered musics, emerged through accidental moments of discovery playing along with recordings or subsequently reflecting on performances I had witnessed. My improvisational practice developed in such a way as to allow these encountered ideas to filter into my playing, freely, as an automatic response to the auditory experience and in a studied fashion through repetition, analysis and development. The overall significance of this in terms of my evolving research methodology was that rather than starting with a preconceived notion of what and how I wanted to improvise, my practice unfolded in an organic way as I interacted and responded to what I saw and heard on a day-to-day basis.

Syncretism

New descriptors emerge throughout the literature attempting to offer fresh perspectives and insights into music-making processes where the composer or improviser creates new hybrid forms from a blend or mix of distinct styles and materials. References to ‘musical hybridization’, ‘poly-genre

¹⁴² Bogdanovic, *Counterpoint for Guitar*. 84.

¹⁴³ Glen Hodges, “The Analysis of Jazz Improvisational Language and Its Use in Generating New Composition and Improvisation.” (PhD diss., Macquarie University, 2007), 11.

¹⁴⁴ David Racanelli, “Formulaic Variation Procedures in Mande Griot (*Jeli*) Guitar Playing and Improvisation,” *Analytical Approaches to World Music* (2012). http://aawmjournals.com/articles/2012a/Racanelli_AAWM_Vol_2_1.pdf. (accessed July 24, 2014).

composition,¹⁴⁵ cross cultural syntheses and ‘intercultural improvisation’¹⁴⁶ all attempt to explain timeless musical processes of adaptation, integration and development. Increasing global connectivity through travel and new technology inevitably intensifies this process enabling an abundant stream of diverse musics to enter our frame of reference and influence our creative practice. Resources such as YouTube, for example, offer researchers access to an enormous range of videos “rife with content for a new breed of musicians...remixers and mashers.”¹⁴⁷

The guitar, in particular, with its dual capacity to represent the diatonic traditions of the West and the modal traditions of diverse folk musics, is an ideal instrument for this kind of experimentation.¹⁴⁸ Whilst a range of factors may contribute to the guitar’s cross-cultural nature the abundant diversity of accessible styles today suggests that a developed capacity to interpret, modify and integrate diverse elements is one important way of navigating a path toward creating an original personal style. In this context syncretism is interpreted as an improvisational tool of musical concretion where multiple and distinct musical ideas are merged to create a unique whole.

My diverse cultural background and experience living and working in Australia, North America and Asia, as well as my enthusiasm and curiosity for diverse music-making practices underpins my syncretic approach to improvisation. The studied, as well as unconscious, integration and amalgamation of learned and absorbed materials and forms enhanced my capacity to develop a personal narrative through my practice.

A brief anecdote goes some way to explaining the open conception of music that underpinned my research methodology. The renowned ethnomusicologist Curt Sachs reflects here on a musical experience he had walking with a friend:

On our walk we passed in front of two churches, one, its door open, letting us hear the organ and the choir, the other sending down the solemn clang of its bells. The bells did not agree with the choir and the organ, either in tempo or in harmony or even in pitch.

¹⁴⁵ Michael Knoff, “Style and Genre Synthesis in Musical Composition – Revealing and Examining the Craft and Creative Processes in Composing Poly-Genre Music.” (PHD diss., Queensland Conservatorium, Griffith University, 2011), 23.

¹⁴⁶ Guy Strazzullo, “An Intercultural Approach to Improvisation.” (Masters diss. University of Western Sydney, 2003), 1. Strazzullo’s insights into the nature of improvised music and guitar playing more specifically reveal connections to several key practitioners of interest in my work; Ralph Towner, Egberto Gismonti and Baden Powell. Strazzullo dissects some of Towners method in Chapter 2 of his thesis demonstrating how such practitioners have influenced his own style of guitar playing.

¹⁴⁷ Thomas Rudolf, *YouTube in Music Education*. (Milwaukee: Hal Leonard Corporation, 2009), 6.

¹⁴⁸ Christopher J. Smith, “The Celtic Guitar: crossing cultural boundaries in the twentieth century.” In *The Cambridge Companion to the Guitar*. Ed. Victor A. Coelho, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 33.

Nonetheless, the coincidence was deeply moving and beautiful. Half consciously we felt that any adjustment in tempo, pitch and harmony would weaken the three-dimensional power of unresolved discordance.¹⁴⁹

This kind of multidimensional listening is reflective of the way I tend to interpret syncretic processes of musical creation. Whilst the above anecdote is a serendipitous occurrence and my approach is stabilized by a degree of intent, the concept of open listening or perceiving unity in diversity is an important one to acknowledge; the way I hear or notice things effects the way I think about what is possible in my practice. This research acknowledges the creative potency of drawing on one's broader life experiences in developing a personal voice through improvisation.

Developing a Personal Style

Ralph Towner is a strong advocate for developing an individual style through improvisation. In the introduction to his method he states that,

The development of a personal and recognizable style is a concern for all creative musicians. The guitar is a particularly revealing and magnifying instrument of the individual mental, emotional, and physical space its player occupies. As you accumulate experience with harmony and melodic gesture, your own musical identity will emerge in these areas as well.¹⁵⁰

Towner's biography states that, "his music transcends the dualities of jazz/classical and composed/improvised music".¹⁵¹ What makes Towner's playing so appealing is the seemingly effortless way he integrates diverse techniques in his improvised passages. Twisting and turning between melodic and arpeggiated *falseta* passages and chordal vamps, Towner is able to adjust the texture and dynamics of his playing with fluidity and precision. This is perceived to result, in part, from having a clear framework for conceptualising the juxtaposition of diverse techniques and materials. We may assume, therefore that, the kinds of materials selected (i.e. chord sequences, basslines, melodic motifs etc...) and the manner they are delineated (charts, scores, sketches or verbal directives) guides compositional intention and shapes the evolution of one's overall style.

¹⁴⁹ Curt Sachs, *The Wellsprings of Music*. (NY: Da Capo Press, 1962), 192.

¹⁵⁰ Towner, *Improvisation and Performance Techniques for Classical and Acoustic Guitar*. 82.

¹⁵¹ Towner, *Improvisation and Performance Techniques for Classical and Acoustic Guitar*. 4.

Ben Verdery promotes the integration of formative vernacular musics in developing a personal connection with an audience. Reflecting on his foray into American popular music he states, “that’s the music that I know totally... I know Jimi [Hendrix] inside and out, so I should play him.”¹⁵² Verdery has a perspective on music-making that allows his personal passions and inspirations to filter through to his performances, compositions and improvisations. For Verdery, authenticity in performance is a large part of the communication process. He suggests that, “any music that’s going to give people joy...fantastic... play it... if you’re excited about playing it”¹⁵³ the audience will follow.

The types materials that have been explored in this research similarly reflect an unfolding personal story. By allowing my improvisational thinking to flourish through all aspects of my methodology I permit the inclusion and intergration of a large array of materials and processes reflective, not only of my cultural heritage, but my day-to-day musical interactions and experiences.

Another guitarist representative of the kinds of cultural and musical practices explored in this research is Baden Powell de Aquino (1937-2000). His influence on modern fingerstyle guitar playing and composition is inestimable. A master improviser weaving Spanish style *rasgueados* with Afro-Brazilian rhythms, jazz harmonies and melodic *falsestas*, Baroque style contrapuntal phrases and contemporary extended techniques, Powell was a true guitar virtuoso and an inspiration to many aspiring guitar improvisers. In a performance of *Naquel Tempo*¹⁵⁴ we can see an elderly Powell elaborate on this prelude with fluidity and spontaneity of phrasing and dynamics, allowing the seamless integration of distinct materials to merge, to become whole, through the improvisatory process. Unpicking the synthesis we can clearly identify the introductory melodic phrase as Spanish/*flamenco* (tempo *rubato*), followed by a phrase reflective of a Baroque-style melody. This introductory section ebbs and flows between these two ideas before the Brazilian/jazz vibe juxtaposes the introductory material. While all elements have derivative theoretical and technical components the important connection to make here, is the link between the process of improvisation and the emergence of new frameworks that allow unique syntheses of style to emerge.

While Egberto Gismonti’s approach is also embedded in the dual traditions of jazz and Brazilian folk music his compositions defy simple categorizations. In a performance of *Danca das*

¹⁵² Ben Verdery, “An Interview with Ben Verdery” YouTube. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_JuoHbk1icA (accessed February 21, 2013).

¹⁵³ Ben Verdery, “An Interview with Ben Verdery.” Ben Verdery playing Jimi Hendrix can be seen on YouTube http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tj5P_90y3Jw (accessed February 21, 2013)

¹⁵⁴ Baden Powell, “Naquel Tempo”, (1990) YouTube. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4hriuRLCcdo> (accessed June 5, 2012.)

*Cabecas*¹⁵⁵ there is a free flowing interpretation of composed materials undulating and shifting as elements are extended and manipulated with dynamic spontaneity. His music has an otherworldly dimension to it that could best be described as Gismonti's personal style. This is perceived to result from a process of stylistic synthesis, compositional intent and technical scope. While many of Gismonti's compositions are scored and developed compositionally his skill and training in jazz and folk idioms enables a spontaneous re-interpretation to emerge in performance. In this sense, his compositions function as improvisation frameworks, with the performative act completing the compositional process.

A more abstract and ethereal approach to contemporary classical guitar improvisation can be seen in an improvisation by classical guitarist Wulfin Lieski.¹⁵⁶ Whilst there are some very brief pentatonic/blues-style references and idiomatic string bends this improvisation is more stylistically experimental than the afore-mentioned examples. This type of improvisation can often be mistaken as a form of unprepared, unorganised (though it may be) or reflexive style of improvisation. Often, it feels natural to break from traditional pathways and explore the sonic possibilities of the guitar without a specific direction or goal being defined through an idiomatic framework. This approach, it could be argued, is more in keeping with a contemporary conception of free improvisation, distinct from the tonal style of Towner, Powell or Gismonti.

In breaking down, however, the material parameters of Lieski's improvisation there are very common techniques unfolding, such as, standard arpeggio patterns, harmonics, chord shapes and melodic runs. It is the way they are put together that defines the broader aesthetic character of the improvisation. It is Lieski's style, his way of integrating materials, his approach to expressing sound and dynamics through this performance that are of particular interest. It is my opinion that this approach is not a separate or distinct category of guitar playing; rather, it is connected to a continuum of practices that foster varying degrees of spontaneity and self-expression through improvisation.

¹⁵⁵ Egeberto Gismonti, "Danca das Cabecas", YouTube. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RI4uZ9J402U> (accessed, March 14, 2011). Much of Gismonti's music that is performed by other guitarists comes from arrangements of his works for other instruments; Dos Aguas is a popular example. This could be due to the level of technical complexity of his solo guitar works as well as Gismonti's improvisational performing style; undoubtedly, simple arrangements are more accessible.

¹⁵⁶ Wulfin Lieski, "Improvisation." Youtube. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tB2M92N764E> (accessed, March 14, 2011).

In the evocative improvisation, *Desert Blossom*¹⁵⁷ Bogdanovic finds a uniquely personal balance between the ancient and the contemporary. A quasi Renaissance/Spanish/world style with ancient modal references unfolds within a contemporary aesthetic framework. The tempo is lilting with ostinato drones underpinning a gentle forward pulsation. This particular improvisation is also representative of some of the syntheses that have emerged in my work.

Bogdanovic recognizes that “an unprecedented multitude of paths, roles and syntheses await the contemporary improviser in today’s ‘multi-perspectival reality.’”¹⁵⁸ Embracing this requires an experimental attitude and the capacity to morph between diverse music-making practices; allowing improvisational practice to guide the overall process of musical creation. Bogdanovic acknowledges the inherent wisdom of the ancient Taoist philosopher Chuang-tzu in negotiating this process:

Without praises, without curses,
now a dragon, now a snake,
you transform with the times,
And never consent to be one thing alone.¹⁵⁹

Cultural heritage, shared language, technical and theoretical processes of innovation and development all seem to coalesce in the methods and practices of many of the great guitar improvisers. While there is only a small amount of contemporary literature on the art of classical guitar improvisation, a growing appreciation for the practice is emerging. New research is beginning to attribute important technical and methodological developments throughout the guitar’s history to processes of improvisation, enabling a conceptual link to be drawn between the practices of the Spanish Baroque guitarists and players of the later Classical and Romantic eras. These historical links have helped conceptualise the approach to guitar improvisation being presented through this research.

¹⁵⁷ Dusan Bogdanovic, “Worlds” CD, M.A. Recordings, 1988.

¹⁵⁸ Bogdanovic, *Counterpoint for Guitar*. 100.

¹⁵⁹ Chuang-tzu, “The Inner Chapters” In *Counterpoint for Guitar*. 100.

While the central focus of my work here relates to the development and articulation of a personal approach to guitar improvisation, it is hoped that my work may lead to a broader acceptance of, and appreciation for, this art form.¹⁶⁰ Whilst it was Segovia's driving ambition to "extract the guitar from the noise and disreputable folkloric instruments"¹⁶¹ it is mine, in part, to question this extraction and that of improvisation more generally, and examine methodologies for their reintegration. While the process has been circuitous, an adage, ascribed to Astor Piazzola, "being is risk...mix styles and smash formulas...perfection is death...long live imperfection,"¹⁶² can serve as a reminder that what underpinned this research was an authentic desire to experiment and create.

¹⁶⁰ Paul Costello, *Improvisation for Classical, Fingerstyle and Jazz Guitar – Creative Strategies, Techniques and Theory*. (Rothersthorpe: Paragon Publishing, 2012), 27. In his introduction Paul Costello acknowledges this shift, highlighting the introduction of improvisation into the exam syllabus for the Trinity, Guild Hall Classical Guitar exams. For more information on the exams can be sourced through; www.trinityguildhall.co.uk.

¹⁶¹ Andres Segovia, "Guitar Review" No. 32, Fall, 1969.

¹⁶² Caleb Bach, "Astor Piazzola: a new-age score for the tango," In. The Online Academic Library, <http://www.thefreelibrary.com/Astor+Piazzolla%3A+a+new-age+score+for+the+tango.-a011810151>. (accessed, May 24, 2014). This adage comes from the film 'Tango: Exile of Guardel', which won Piazzola a Caesar Award for best film music in the 1986. In the film the poet Juan Uno, recites the famous line which many believe succinctly distills Piazzola's compositional philosophy.

Chapter 2: Improvisation Methodology

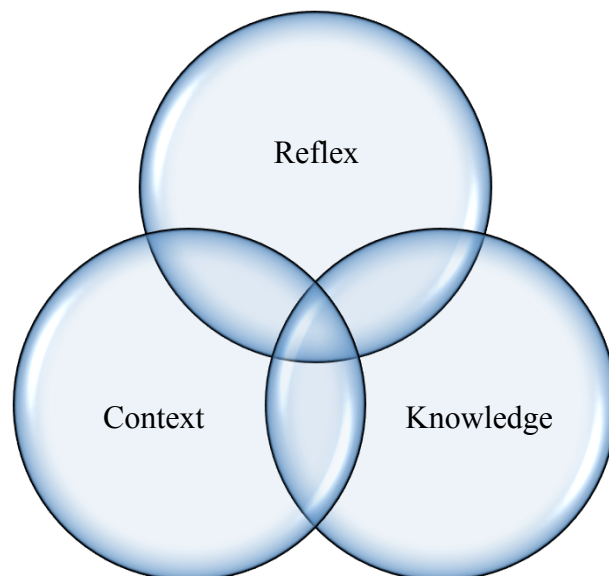
The following chapter outlines my improvisation methodology with the understanding that the concepts expressed here are not, “precepts that I give, but researches which [sic] I communicate.”¹⁶³ Several observations, drawn from this research, underpin my conception of classical guitar improvisation:

1. A classical guitar improviser is a musician who reflects the spirit of the times; the sounds and musics we absorb consciously and unconsciously become the wellsprings for our self-expression.
2. An awareness of the performative lineage of the classical guitar can foster an appreciation for the role improvisation has played in the emergence of new styles and forms, highlighting technical and theoretical developments and illuminating creative pathways.
3. Developing the skill to improvise in different styles generates the flexibility of mind and body necessary to absorb, adapt and integrate diverse sounds and materials into a unified whole; a ‘personal style.’

As the prime directive of this research was the presentation of improvised music for solo guitar the notion of performance was never far from my mind. Consequently, a natural tension arose between the analytical and reflective processes that informed methodological developments and the emotional or expressive processes that emerge during peak moments of improvisational activity. A resolution to this tension came as I began to observe and differentiate distinct processes unfolding in my practice. Figure 2.1 depicts the three interlocking processes that underpinned my approach to improvisation:

¹⁶³ Fernando Sor, *Complete Method for the Spanish Guitar* Trans A. Merrick (1827). (NY: Da Capo Press, 1971), 46.

Figure 2.1 The Improvisation Process



Knowledge as a process of learning relates to the memorisation and assimilation of theoretical, technical and material ideas.¹⁶⁴ The context in which these elements coalesce into a musical work is defined by the designated framework, style and form used to integrate and apply this knowledge.¹⁶⁵ Reflex, as a musical process, refers to the intuitive, unconscious or automatic expression of contextualised knowledge in performance. By identifying and naming which process was in ascendancy and directing my attention and commitment to that process I developed a way of negotiating layers of complexity in my studio practice that gradually led to more fluid and integrated improvisations in live performance contexts.¹⁶⁶

The Improvisation Spectrum

The concepts and methods outlined in the first chapter belong to a spectrum of improvisational practices, each fostering differing degrees and styles of improvisation in performance.¹⁶⁷ This understanding allows for a holistic conception of improvisation that differentiates and draws threads between distinct and interrelated approaches. The more abstract or free approach synonymous with the later work of Derek Bailey, for example, can be seen as representative of the free or abstract end

¹⁶⁴ Glen Hodges, "The Analysis of Jazz Improvisational Language and Its Use in Generating New Composition and Improvisation." (PhD diss., Macquarie University, 2007), 11.

¹⁶⁵ G. Radai, "Strategies for Improvisation."

<http://webzoom.freewebs.com/lowendr/Strategies%20for%20Improvisation.pdf>. (Accessed March 7, 2014), 2.

¹⁶⁶ David Liebman, *A Chromatic Approach to Jazz Harmony and Melody*. (Germany: Advance Music, 1991), 10.

¹⁶⁷ Richard Addison, "A New Look at Improvisation in Music Education", *British Journal of Music Education*, no. 3; (Nov, 1988): pp. 255-267. This article discusses the improvisation spectrum in so far as it relates to diverse practices in music education.

of the spectrum and the fluid, spontaneous interpretation or arrangement material developed through a framework, representative of the kinds of practices seen in the work of Ralph Towner, represents the defined end of the spectrum.¹⁶⁸ There is no creative or artistic value judgment placed on any region of the spectrum; a characteristic of a broad approach.

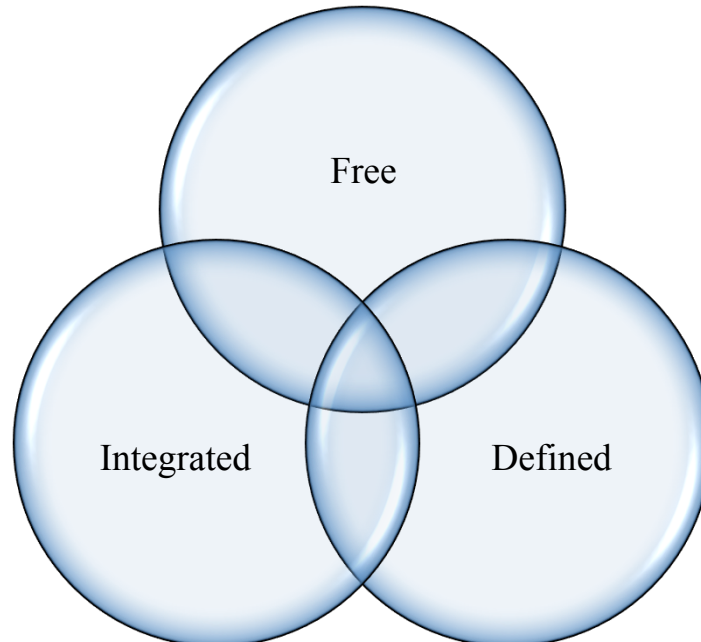
Figure 2.2 The Improvisation Spectrum



Three Modes of Improvisation

For methodological clarity I have divided this spectrum into three categories or modes of improvisation: Free, Defined and Integrated.

Figure 2.3 Three Modes of Improvisation



¹⁶⁸ While it is acknowledged that these categorisations are general and open to reinterpretation they were deemed relevant in so far as they differentiated the distinct improvisational approaches that were being explored and integrated into my practice.

1. Free: spontaneous sound unfolding through the free interpolation of diverse tonal and or non-tonal materials without preconceived or specified theoretical frameworks or directives.

No music is completely free in concept, except perhaps the musings or experiments of a child in their first music lessons. A professionally trained musician, however, has absorbed too many ideas to be completely free of them in performance. My understanding of free improvisation, therefore, is that it is reflective of a kind of unconscious, spontaneous, formless, playful musical abstraction. The materials used here may reference or imitate other styles and sounds, be new constructs pulled together in the moment through imagination, chance or conscious experimentation. This type of playing can be technically challenging and risky yet the attitude is generally free in spirit and essence. Free improvisation, as a process of personal experimentation within the context of this research, is free of specific predesigned frameworks, not necessarily free from prior forms, theories or materials.¹⁶⁹

2. Defined: improvisatory practices based on theoretical or stylistic strictures implemented through the lens of a specified framework.

This category of improvisation underpins most genre-specific improvisatory practices in that the music-making is based on directives, conveyed orally/aurally or through a notated method which outlines the theoretical rules, techniques and practices that govern style and content.

3. Integrated: an improvisational approach developed through the amorphous or specified integration of ‘free’ and ‘defined’ practices. Here, there is a performative quality to one’s playing, rather than an analytical one. Resultantly, this category represents the kind of improvisation one hopes to express in live performance.

The purpose of separating or categorising modes of improvisation emerged as a practical necessity. During the ‘woodshedding’ process (learning new techniques, exploring permutations and variations) it was deemed necessary to acknowledge the type of improvisation (free, defined or integrated) that was unfolding at any given time in order to help concentrate energies and guide technical and theoretical decisions.

¹⁶⁹ Derek Bailey, *Improvisation – its nature and practice in music*. 83.

Delineating Concepts and Materials

While my approach was influenced by an evolving aural vocabulary of materials the delineation of scored materials was also fundamental to my method. Various approaches were employed, they include: traditional scores, recordings, diagrams, sketches and written verbal directives. The efficacy of delineating materials varied according to the style and form of improvisation being explored. A range of perceived benefits and limitations of delineating scored materials were observed:

Perceived Benefits:

1. Scores act as visual prompts for conceptual, theoretical and technical ideas.
2. Scores help in the learning and integration of more complex layers and textures of sound.
3. Scores assist the memorisation process.
4. Scores can help demonstrate the methodological underpinnings of a given approach; they have pedagogical merit.

Perceived Limitations:

1. Scoring ideas can interrupt the creative flow of an improvisation.
2. Scores can restrict the scope of one's imagination.
3. Scores can generate undue complexity.
4. Scores do not accurately convey the dynamic thrust, or amorphous rhythmic nature of an improvised musical idea.

Incorporated Materials

Western Classical Tradition

Harmony: Diatonic harmony, strumming patterns and arpeggio variations

Melody: Scale and mode shapes, melodic variations and melodic motifs

Jazz Materials

Jazz harmonies (idiomatic jazz chord shapes), altered scales and chromaticism, applied arpeggiation techniques (separated arpeggios or finger-style sweeping)

Materials and Forms Derived and Interpreted from Folk and Ethnic Musics

Celtic: Reels, Melodies and Acoustic strumming techniques

Bluegrass Fingerpicking: ‘claw hammer’ arpeggios techniques

Flamenco: *Rasgueado* techniques, *compass* forms, *falsetas* passagework

Mariachi: rhythms and strumming patterns

Cuban: rhythms and accompaniment patterns

Argentinean Tango: rhythms and accompaniment patterns

Asiatic Effects and References: General imitations, Thai folk (*Isan*), Shakuhachi, Balinese gamelan effects

West African Guitar Styles: *Kora* imitation and ornamentation

Technical Applications

Melodic Playing: free stroke and rest stroke melodic passagework, cross string harp-scales and separated arpeggios [See Appendix A – Scale Shapes and Appendix B – Melodic Variation]

Strumming Patterns, *Rasgueados* and Arpeggiation [See Appendix D – Rhythms, Accompaniment Patterns and Ornamental Arpeggiation, p. 139]

Exotic and Extended Techniques

Gamelan Effect, Water Effect, Arpeggiated Harmonics, Percussion Techniques and Effects, LH Tapping (Left Hand Melody), *Kora*-style Ornamentation, rock pizzicato (palm muting), *Rasgueado* Tremolo, *Ud*-style picking, Sax-popping (LH tapping with palm muting) [See Appendix F – Extended Techniques]

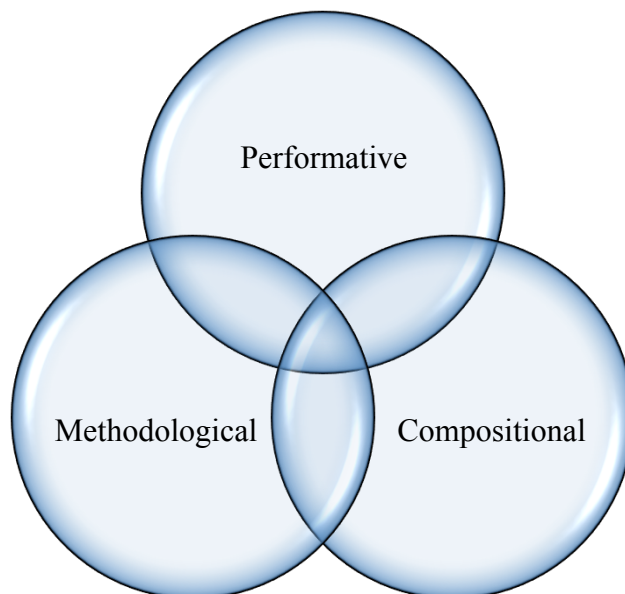
Task Discernment

Deciding when to score ideas and when to allow aural processes to guide my improvisations became one of the many dialectic challenges to impact this research.¹⁷⁰ My initial tendency was to build from a framework, scoring as many novel or interesting themes, chord shapes or techniques that surfaced while improvising. In the lead up to a performance, however, this seemed to hinder the flow and expressive direction of my playing. In this context, less (scoring) was more (music-making). One had to be content to let variations, technical insights and permutations subside and disappear, knowing, and accepting they may never return in quite the same way, if at all.

A strategy that helped determine when to stop and score and when to play through my inventions was to ascertain the novelty (technical or musical) of a given idea. The novel idea (e.g. unique chord shape, technique or variation), less likely to reemerge in the same way, sometimes warranted documentation through a score. Like many challenges that emerged throughout this research a resolution was not found by choosing one approach over the other. A tenuous balance gradually emerged, one where the choice to score or not to score, became less fraught with negative implications. My understanding of the practice of *partimento* in this context helped me to develop an individual model that recognized the inherent and intertwining qualities of delineated material and aural vocabulary. The key, therefore, lay in developing an intuitive capacity to discern whether the preeminent task was methodological, performative or compositional. (See Figure 2.4)

¹⁷⁰ Tord Gustavson, "The Dialectics of Eroticism." In *Improvisation – Between Technique and Spontaneity*. Ed. Maria Santi, (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), 8. Tord Gustavson's discourse on improvisation links the psychology of intimacy with music-making. It is an insightful paper for those grappling with how to balance the many conceptual and practical dilemmas that emerge through the improvising process.

Figure 2.4 Task-Discernment



Terminology and Enharmonic Spelling

Different musical terminologies can create confusion when deciding how best to delineate materials. This became particularly evident when combining materials from diverse idioms. For example, the A melodic minor scale has different connotations and practical applications in jazz theory from the way it is understood in Classical music. If one is varying or imitating a passage from a Baroque framework, for example, the usage of the melodic minor scale has distinct stylistic constraints; often the scale reverts to its natural form when descending. In the jazz, idiom, however, the same scale may be used to generate colour, dissonance or chromaticism over an altered Ab7 chord.¹⁷¹ Despite the potential confusion, differing terminologies can be conceptually liberating, leading to new theories and musical pathways.

One such example occurred while developing *false*ta passagework for several flamenco-inspired improvisations. The II chord in the traditional *flamenco* progression iv - III - II - I (Phrygian on E) when played as a F7b5 chord scale (C melodic minor starting on F), may function as a substitute for the Lydian mode on F. (only differentiated by the added Eb in the F7b5 chord) When viewed as C melodic minor chord-scale, however, the resultant arpeggio can generate interesting tonal complexity over the original progression. By experimenting with different terminologies and related theoretical procedures I have developed a method for exploiting diverse applications in my

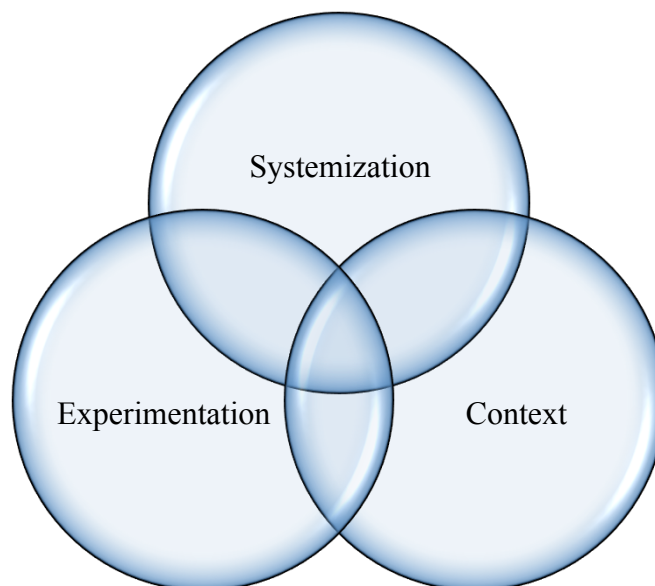
¹⁷¹ Joe Pass and Bill Thrasher, *Joe Pass Guitar Style*. (CA: Alfred Publishing, 1985), 16.

own personal syntheses. The terminology, in this context, functions as a pivot between distinct styles; one toward the jazz idiom another toward the Baroque.¹⁷²

Guitar Harmony: Developing a Chordal Vocabulary

Developing a system of fretboard harmony suited to the practice of improvisation requires multiple layers of theory, concept and design. As I examined the process of learning and integrating chord shapes in my practice I began to understand the importance of balancing theoretical understanding with shape recognition, variation and chance discovery.¹⁷³ The process of ‘mixed ascendancy’ ascribed to heterarchical processes of organization was also deemed relevant in this context as the focus of development at any given time can shift radically from system or context to free play and experimentation.¹⁷⁴ A linear model did not seem conducive to individual creativity; one that opens pathways and reveals connections is more useful; figure 2.5 demonstrates the three perspectives that were applied in this research.

Figure 2.5 Heterarchical Chord Shape Assimilation



¹⁷² Ruben Diaz, “Breaking the Cliché Chord Changes por Fandangos / 1 – Ruben Diaz Andaluzan Guitar Lesson CFG Malaga,” Youtube. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5AiOrTmKnHM>. (accessed August 2013.) The work of Ruben Diaz in breaking down barriers between styles has helped strengthen my understanding of the interrelation between diverse practices and the importance of integrating new procedures with extand forms.

¹⁷³ Often during an improvisation one will make a mistake or accidentally construct a new shape unconsciously. One could argue, however, that nothing is chance when you improvise; the act of improvisation can, to some extent be defined by chance.

¹⁷⁴ Karen Stephenson, “Neither a Hierarchy Nor Network: An Argument for Heterarchy.” Ross Dawson blog. http://www.rossdawsonblog.com/HRPS_Heterarchy.pdf (accessed, May 15, 2014).

While the chord shapes outlined by Amat and McFadden (p. 27-28) bookend four centuries of experimentation with the systemization process, Horetzky's cadences (p. 29) and the chords outlined in Towner's integrated improvisation studies (p. 30) are examples of the process shifting toward the contextual application of chord shapes. An improviser, nevertheless, continues to experiment, to find new sounds through the discovery of new shapes and new permutations of existing shapes. Exploring diverse stylistic amalgamations was integral in developing a personal vocabulary of chord shapes that were drawn upon, consciously and unconsciously, in performance contexts.

Chord-shapes can be placed into three distinct categories pertaining to the application of specific right-hand techniques:

1. Strumming (sweeping one or more fingers of the right hand across two or more strings in rhythmic unison)
2. Block-chords (generally a three or four part harmonic voicing plucked in rhythmic unison by right hand fingers)
3. Arpeggiation (a broken chord where individual notes are plucked using a distinctive right hand right pattern)

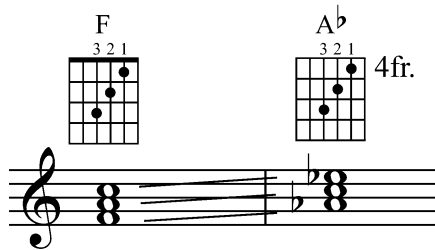
While all categories are interconnected and multiple technical applications can be applied to each there are certain shapes that suit specific techniques more than others. A *flamenco* inspired improvisation framework, for example, would link to a cache of related dronal chord shapes (with related dissonances) suitable for strumming, while a different framework with different aesthetic directives might allude to a distinct series of appropriate chord shapes.

Open vs. Stopped Note Chord Shapes

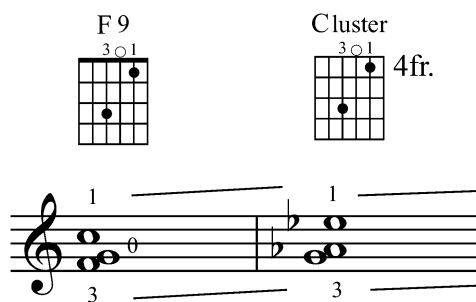
Acoustic guitar styles commonly use open position chord shapes as well as chords in different positions of the fretboard that combine stopped notes with open strings. This generates the resonance and sustain necessary for strumming and *arpeggiation*. One of the problems of using chord shapes with a combination of open strings and stopped notes, however, is that they do not generate easily transposable shapes. Shifting a 'stopped-note shape' will result in an exact

transposition, whereas shifting a chord that combines stopped and open string notes will generate a distinct, if not texturally related, chord.¹⁷⁵

Example 2.1 Chord Shape Shifting (exact transposition)



Example 2.2 Shape Shifting (technical transposition)



The choice of application is contextual, reflecting the kind of process unfolding in the moment of an improvisation. Free, integrated or defined modes of improvisation would result in differing interpretations and applications of the harmony. In Example 2.2 the resultant harmony generated through the spontaneous improvisational shift of hand position created what was perceived at the time to be a harmonic cluster. Often, while improvising, I was content to let these contrasting sounds emerge without the stopping to theoretically frame the resultant harmony. On other occasions analysis would lead to a deeper understanding of the possibilities and contexts of a particular discovery or invention. Intuiting when to keep improvising and when to analyse is again resolved by discerning whether the preeminent task is performative, methodological or compositional.

While the clustered notes, A \flat , G natural, and E flat equate to an A \flat M7 chord, the chord is not attained by thinking of A \flat M7, rather, the shape of the preceding F9 chord is being shifted (in this case) by the interval of a minor 3rd to see what sounds may emerge. The process in which the

¹⁷⁵ Ralph Towner, *Improvisation for Classical and Fingerstyle Guitar*. 10. Towner includes the practice of shape shifting with stopped and open string notes in his arpeggio exercises to generate harmonic interest.

AbM7 chord is attained is intuitive or reflex action. Through analysis, the naming, function and sound of the chord develops a new idea, a new theory or musical knowledge.

One can gain insight in this area by outlining fretboard harmony in a congruent fashion, i.e. categorise shape development both theoretically and technically. Depending on a range of cognitive and reflexive improvisational processes the treatment of these shapes resulted in vastly different musical outcomes and the creation of new shapes.

Rhythms and Accompaniment Patterns

Multiple strategies can be applied to the systemisation of arpeggio and strumming studies based on diverse rhythm and accompaniment patterns. Patterns can be structured according to categories of rhythm, technique, genre or compositional factors. Various processes that assisted in the assimilation and integration of these patterns and their subsequent variation and development of through improvisation were identified. Initially, identifying the right hand pattern and focusing on it's the accompanimental quality helped assimilate the fundamental technique and rhythm of the pattern. When the process was adequately integrated I would listen for compositional layers within the structure of the sound. By identifying a potential area for development such as a bassline or melody that could be drawn out of, or developed from the pattern I would explore left hand applications to extend the compositional potential of the pattern.

The basic rhythmic pattern for a rumba is identified in Example 2.3. A simple arpeggio, like the one depicted in Example 2.4, can then be applied to the pattern. By learning the pattern with open strings first and clearly delineating the right hand technique required to articulate the arpeggio aural perception can focus on underlying patterns suitable for the development of juxtapositional content. Example 2.5 demonstrates how a scale can emerge from within the arpeggio by allocating notes stopped by the left-hand and plucked with the right-hand thumb. By shifting aural attention to the higher note, plucked by the *a* finger, and re-adjusting the placement of this note within the bar, a new melodic line can be developed using the same technique. (See Example 2.6, p. 58)

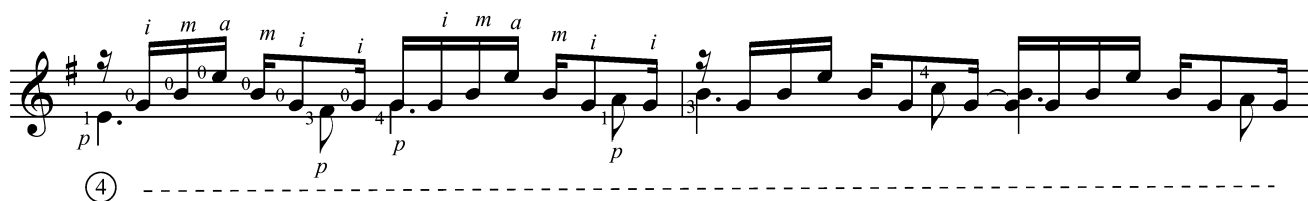
Example 2.3 Rumba - Rhythmic Pattern



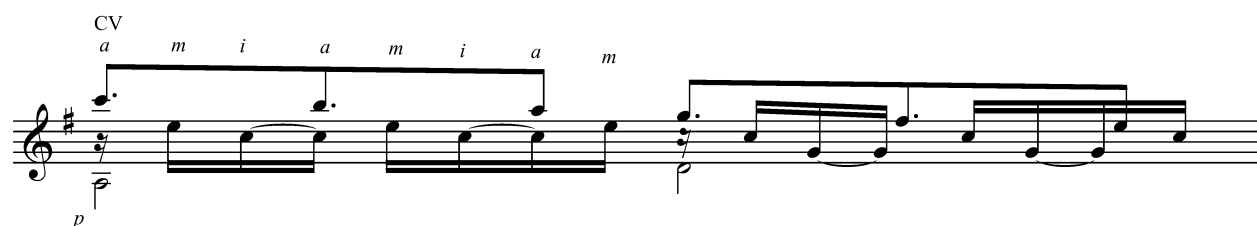
Example 2.4 Generated Arpeggio



Example 2.5 Underlying Compositional Layers



Example 2.6 Melody in the Upper Voice

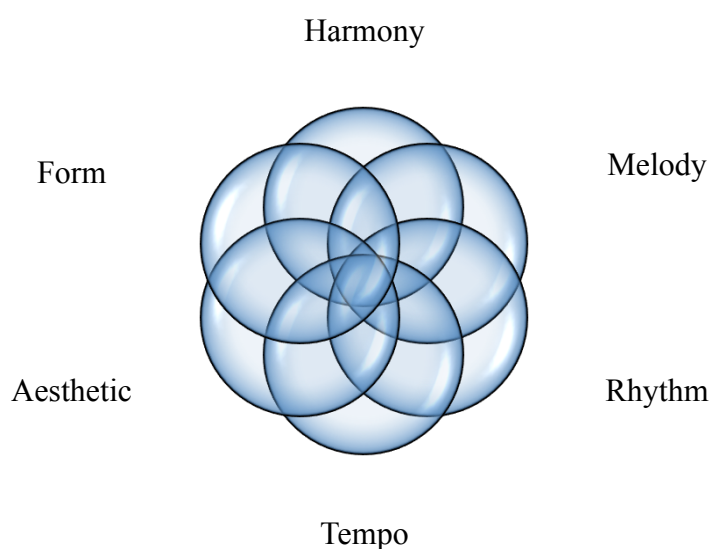


A selection of applied examples is contained in Appendix D - Rhythms, Accompaniment Patterns and Ornamental Apreggios, p. 139.

Conceptual Tools

By applying the heterarchical process model to a range of distinct processes and procedures I have developed a useful tool for conceptualising the design of my improvisation frameworks. Figure 2.6 outlines the interlocking elements of a specific improvisation. These elements are not restrictive; rather, they guide the shape and style of an improvisation and serve as a preparative study model for live performance.

Figure 2.6 Improvisation: Interlocking Elements



Linking Shapes

The methods and treatises referred to in Chapter One reveal that many guitar composers and improvisers have grappled with the usage of shapes, charts and diagrams in the comprehension and memorization of musical materials. The framework is a particularly enlightening tool in this respect as it allows for the integration and juxtaposition of a diverse range of conceptual tools. The example below highlights some of the standard tools incorporated into my approach.

Example 2.7 A minor: Scale, Chord, Arpeggio and Contrapuntal Shapes in the Fifth Position

Scale Shape

Shape III 4pos.

V IV V

Chord Shape

A mi 5fr.

Arpeggio Shape (melodic/separated)¹⁷⁶

A mi79 5fr.

Contrapuntal Shape

A mi

¹⁷⁶ The difference between standard arpeggios and separated arpeggios (fingerstyle sweeping) is referred to in Appendix B, p. 129.

Bach¹⁷⁸

The image displays a musical score for guitar, organized into three systems. Each system consists of a guitar fretboard diagram, a musical staff with a treble clef and a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#), and a bass line.

System 1:

- Chord 1:** C#7/B. Fretboard diagram shows a 6-fret position. Musical notation includes a bass line with a whole note B2 and a treble line with a half note G#4 and a half note F#4.
- Chord 2:** C#7/G#. Fretboard diagram shows a 4-fret position. Musical notation includes a bass line with a whole note G#2 and a treble line with a half note E#4 and a half note D#4.
- Chord 3:** C#7/E#. Fretboard diagram shows a 7-fret position. Musical notation includes a bass line with a whole note E#2 and a treble line with a half note C#5 and a half note B#4.

System 2:

- Chord 4:** C#7. Fretboard diagram shows a 7-fret position. Musical notation includes a bass line with a whole note C#3 and a treble line with a half note G#4 and a half note F#4.
- Chord 5:** C#7/E#. Fretboard diagram shows a 7-fret position. Musical notation includes a bass line with a whole note E#2 and a treble line with a half note C#5 and a half note B#4.
- Chord 6:** F#mi. Fretboard diagram shows a 7-fret position. Musical notation includes a bass line with a whole note F#2 and a treble line with a half note D#4 and a half note C#4.
- Chord 7:** Bmi. Fretboard diagram shows a 7-fret position. Musical notation includes a bass line with a whole note B2 and a treble line with a half note G#4 and a half note F#4.

System 3:

- Chord 8:** D. Fretboard diagram shows a 5-fret position. Musical notation includes a bass line with a whole note D2 and a treble line with a half note A#4 and a half note G#4.
- Chord 9:** E7/G#. Fretboard diagram shows a 4-fret position. Musical notation includes a bass line with a whole note G#2 and a treble line with a half note B4 and a half note A#4.
- Chord 10:** F#7/A#. Fretboard diagram shows a 6-fret position. Musical notation includes a bass line with a whole note A#2 and a treble line with a half note C#5 and a half note B#4.

The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and fingerings. The guitar fretboard diagrams show the positions of the fingers (black dots) and the strings (white circles). The musical notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#), and a 4/4 time signature. The bass line is written in a lower register, and the treble line is written in a higher register.

While all of these experiments were found to be useful theoretically, more work is required to fully internalise and integrate the concepts in live performance. It is hoped therefore that the methodological tools developed through this research will inform further practical applications in the future.

¹⁷⁸ J. S. Bach, “Prelude from the 4th Lute Suite,” *Bach Lute Suites for Guitar – The complete works for lute solo by Johann Sebastian Bach. Newly transcribed and annotated, including historical and performance notes*. Transcribed by Jerry Willard, (NY: Ariel Publications, 1980), 58-59.

Constructing Improvisation Frameworks

For many experienced practitioners of improvisation (particularly jazz musicians), improvisation frameworks are a natural tool for building skills and materials for the purpose improvising. The jazz idiom is what it is in large part due to the frameworks: songs, ballads and compositions, which underpin its evolving practice. For the classical guitarist, however, there is no current overriding contemporary cultural or musical framework for implementing improvisational practice. As such, one needed to be constructed, and the best place to start, from my perspective, was within the historical traditions of the classical guitar. The Spanish Baroque guitar practices of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries offered the range of technically applicable practices, such as ornamental strums, arpeggiation and melodic interlacing necessary to develop a contemporary model.¹⁷⁹

Fundaments of the Spanish Baroque Model:

1. Simple chord sequences with accompaniment patterns
2. Diatonic framework
3. Melodic motifs, melodic shape and direction
4. Ornamental practices across elements: arpeggiation, strumming and melody
5. Despite homophonic ascendancy, contrapuntal influences are maintained
6. Aesthetic qualities predate other related styles such as flamenco, African, Celtic and Latin American Guitar styles
7. Strong theoretical, pedagogical and methodological framework

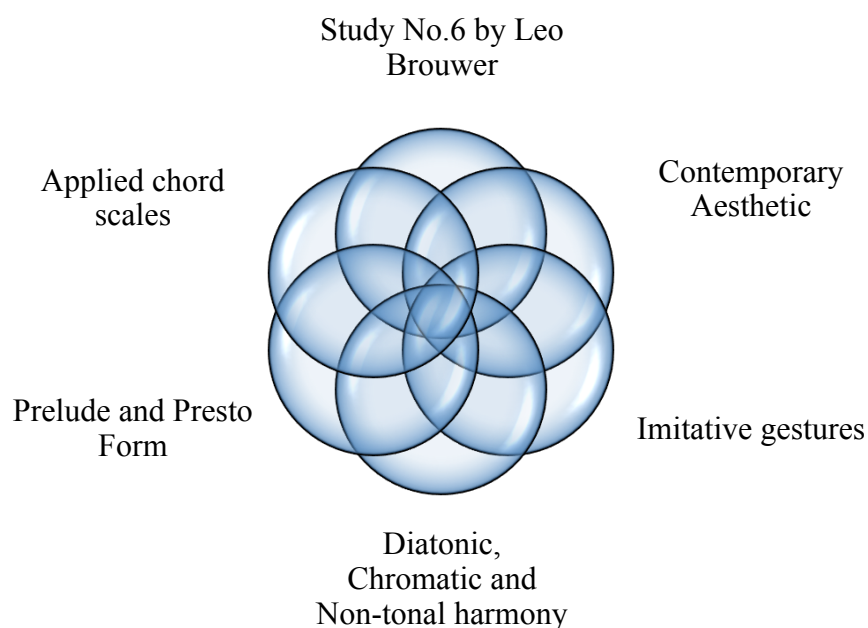
It must be stipulated here that my intention was not to reconceptualise Baroque guitar practices or supersede this most beautiful instrument with the modern guitar. Rather, it is to understand how the kinds of improvisational processes, methods and frameworks, (synonymous with this period) might inform a contemporary approach to Classical guitar improvisation that is personal, integrated and historically informed. Once this conceptual model began to take shape my research methodology developed clarity, direction and purpose. I could then view any materials through this lens.

¹⁷⁹ While my interpretation of these fundamentals is broad and could be used to describe the approach underpinning a range of distinct styles and genres the guitar practices of the Spanish Baroque helped ground my conception of improvisation in the historical traditions of the Classical guitar. While it is understood by the author that different interpretations may be made of my approach the derived model description was deemed to appropriately serve in framing the interlocking elements incorporated in my practice.

Improvisations, such as the *Prelude and Presto on Brouwer Study No. 6* [DVD1: Track 1], for example, emerged as all encountered forms and materials began to be examined through the fundamentals outlined above.

Applied Framework Model: Brouwer Study No. 6

Figure 2.7 Interlocking Elements - Prelude and Presto on Brouwer Study No. 6



The starting point for this improvisation was the original study by Leo Brouwer.¹⁸⁰ The scored material outlined in example 2.10 shows the harmony (with accompanying chord charts) underpinning the study. The delineated material was accompanied by simple constraining parameters divided into separate sections a slow introductory prelude and faster section marked presto. Each section was marked by descriptors designed to help shape the character of the improvisation. In the prelude the following descriptors were used: free rhythm, whip bird glissandos, percussive effects (tremolo tambour), ethereal gliding melody and chiming chordal clusters. The description of the presto section incorporated the terms: imitative arpeggio, pulsating rhythm and fast tempo.

¹⁸⁰ Leo Brouwer, "Etude No. 6." In. *Estudios Sencillos*. (Paris: Editions Max Eschig, 1972).

Example 2.10 *Prelude and Presto on Brouwer Study No. 6* - Framework¹⁸¹

The image displays four systems of guitar chords and their corresponding musical notation. Each system consists of four chord diagrams with fingerings and distances, followed by a musical staff. The chords are:

- System 1:** A(#11) (4ft.), A7b5 (4ft.), AM6#11 (4ft.), A6911 (3ft.).
- System 2:** Amaj9 (2ft.), Ami9 (1ft.), Cmaj7/G (2ft.), F#mi711 (1ft.).
- System 3:** Dmi9/F (1ft.), A11/E (1ft.), E, Dmi6/A (10ft.).
- System 4:** A913 (10ft.), A6911 (3ft.), Amaj79 (5ft.), A6911 (3ft.), A9 (1ft.).

The musical notation is in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The score is marked with a 118 at the beginning of the fourth system.

In exploring melody through this framework I used the chord-scale approach depicted throughout Towner's method.¹⁸² While Towner generally includes insightful fingering options no fingering is given for the initial scale, rather, it was perceived more effective in this context to explore broader possibilities free from standard shapes; the harp-like fingering delineated in bar 4 is one such example.

¹⁸¹ Leo Brouwer, "Etude No. 6." The harmonic analysis depicted here is only one interpretation that served the required purpose of establishing a framework for the interpolation of melodic content.

¹⁸² Guilherme Vincens, "Study Guide on Leo Brouwer's First 10 Studies for Guitar," *Guitar Player Magazine* <http://www.guitarramagazine.com/LeoBrouwerStudies>. (accessed, August 7, 2013)

Example 2.11 Chord Scales and Arpeggios

Melodic Development

Melodic Development

Ama7+11 Lydian mode: harp-like fingering

Arpeggiation

original Brouwer arpeggio pattern

Arpeggio Variation 1. (Celtic Harp Pattern)

[illegible]

While this improvisation was only performed once during this research it marked an important turning point in my understanding of the nature and impact of utilising frameworks in the dissemination of improvised music for solo guitar. The applied methodological procedure inspired an original contribution that, in the opinion of the author, resulted in a free flowing musical improvisation. A series of observations subsequent to this performance helped to form the crux of my thesis which rests on the notion that improvisation frameworks: guide technical, theoretical and aesthetic intent, help galvanise creative energies, limit or restrict the scope of a given improvisation, are conducive to autodidactic learning and help integrate a diverse range of materials. The kinds of strategies that can be employed in varying or generating ideas from the delineated referent material are almost infinite.

Improvisational Strategies

While improvisational strategies such as variation and imitation are mirrored across a spectrum of compositional practices, “the improviser’s decision-making time differs from that of the composer of fixed music.”¹⁸³ As the technical processes of application and implementation in improvisation are intimately connected to performative processes, knowledge (theory, compositional tools) and context (style and form) need to become automatic; they need to flow “through the fingers”.¹⁸⁴ Compositional tools and devices were employed across a range of interrelated processes:

1. Small-Scale Processes

- a) Ornamentation
- b) Variation
- c) Imitation
- d) Small Scale Syncretism (brief genre signals and gestures)

2. Large-Scale Processes

- a) Form
- b) Style
- c) Large Scale Syncretism (creating a style through the combination of two or more general styles)
- d) Compositional Procedure (minimalism, vamping etc.)

3. Reflexive Processes

- a) Chance/Experimentation
- b) Verbal Directives
- c) Sketches and Symbolism

¹⁸³ Byrnside, 255.

¹⁸⁴ Gorgio Sanguinetti, “Thorough Bass as Music Theory” In *Partimento and Continuo Playing in Theory and Practice*, - *Collected Writings of the Orpheus Institute*. Ed. Dirk Moelants. (Belgium: Leuven University Press, 2010),71.

Zooming in and Out of the Framework

By changing the lens through which we view the framework material the nature of the framework is altered. Parts of a chord sequence, for example, can be extended or rhythmically augmented as is demonstrated in figure 2.8.¹⁸⁵

Figure 2.8 Sequence Augmentation

Ami ----- G ----- F ----- E -----
F----- E -----
E -----

The process is reversed in figure 2.9.

Figure 2.9 Sequence Diminution

Ami ----- G ----- F ----- E -----
Ami ----- G ----- Ami ---- G -----

The ability to zoom in on, and expand or contract a particular parameter, whilst maintaining a peripheral view of the larger form or sequence is one way to develop fluidity and freedom as a soloist. In this sense, freedom is being able to confine and limit while staying in touch with the broader picture; it is not complete liberation from externality. The process, applicable to any materials contained within the framework (e.g. rhythms, melodies, extended techniques etc.), can serve several functions: it can provide tools for skill development, deepen theoretical knowledge and provide a strategy for adjusting form.

¹⁸⁵ The terms augmentation and diminution are simple terms that I have applied in describing the lengthening or shortening of a musical sequence or phrase.

Aesthetic Descriptors

When forming a concept for a particular improvisation, descriptors appropriate to the integrated materials and general form of the improvisation were applied. The words *flamenco*-style or Baroque-style can activate auditory reflexes that can produce aesthetic and dynamic musical responses. This is also the case for other dynamic and expressive markings and phrases such as; ethereal, free, vibrant, birdsong, trance-like etc...

Understanding the process behind the incorporation of aesthetic descriptors is another important aspect of framing many of the subtle dynamic tasks informing a given improvisation. When one begins to morph into a more contemporary, ironic or caricature-like expression or adaptation of a particular motif or theme, knowing what is happening (which process or concept is being explored) helps balance emotive or instinctual expressivity with the theoretical and formal content of the applied framework material. The developed methodology, therefore, evolves from the recognition that you don't have time in live performance to reflect deeply on compositional choices and need to build the capacity and skill to do this in a real-time performance scenario.

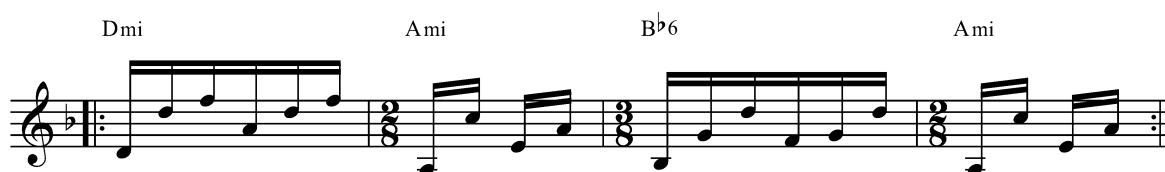
This research does not attempt to proffer extensive ethnomusicological insight into the materials and techniques incorporated from specific genres or guitar styles. While the musical frameworks referred to in Chapter Three include imitated and adapted materials sourced from a range of musics this research is focused more on the methods and processes of incorporation and development. In this context the link between descriptors and materials is amorphous but important. My usage of the terms Celtic-style strumming or *Ud*-style plucking, for example, is not meant to be a highly accurate representation or interpretation of style, rather, it is personal, imaginative response to encountered styles and sounds. The descriptors included in my frameworks helped to shape the general style of the improvisation, prompt stylistic gestures and to generate links to related materials and techniques.

The combined words *soleares fantasy*, for example, generates a personal impression of the *solea palos* unfolding in a free or dream-like form. Other examples where descriptors are used as working titles for improvisational frameworks include: *Celtino* Variations (Celtic/Latin Style variations), *Variaciones Ironicos* (Ironic Variations) and *Theme and Pulsations on the Song of the Chanter* (rhythmic morphing on an extant theme).

Ornamental Arpeggiation

The concept of ornamental *arpeggiation* was one of the many discoveries to emerge through this research that helped elucidate some of the prior to hidden processes that underpinned my approach to arpeggio variation. Example 2.12 demonstrates a standard accompanimental-style arpeggio pattern.

Example 2.12 Introductory Arpeggio Vamp from *Rondo Celtino* [See Folio – See DVD Maleny Recital)



By contrast, example 2.13 reveals how an arpeggio can be perceived ornamentally. These kinds of ornaments unfolded in my practice, without notational prompts or directives, through instinctive processes of variation.

Example 2.13 Excerpt from Fredrick's Window



Example 2.14 demonstrates the kinds of incorporated notational experiments emerging through this research.¹⁸⁶

Example 2.14 Sign for Ornamental Arpeggiation



¹⁸⁶ James Tyler, *A Guide to Playing the Baroque Guitar*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011), 14.

Melodic Ornamentation and Variation

Observing the way both melodic variation and ornamentation unfolded in my improvisations revealed a perceived nexus between the two practices. Example 2.17 demonstrates the link: rhythmic diminution transforms a melodic variation into an ornament; conversely, the rhythmic augmentation of the ornament transforms it into a variation.

Example 2.17 Melodic Variation

Variation 1

Scale Degree

Ascending Descending

1 2 3 2 3 4 3 4 5 5 4 3 4 3 2 3 2 1

The image shows two musical staves. The first staff, labeled 'Variation 1', contains two measures of music. The first measure is an ascending eighth-note scale from C4 to G4, with scale degrees 1, 2, 3, 2, 3, 4, 3, 4, 5 indicated above it. The second measure is a descending eighth-note scale from G4 to C4, with scale degrees 5, 4, 3, 4, 3, 2, 3, 2, 1 indicated above it. The second staff shows the same two measures but with triplet markings (a '3' over each group of three notes) over the final three notes of each scale, representing a rhythmic ornamentation.

Variation 1 (ornamental variant)

The image shows a single musical staff for 'Variation 1 (ornamental variant)'. It contains two measures of music. The first measure is an ascending eighth-note scale from C4 to G4. The second measure is a descending eighth-note scale from G4 to C4. Both scales have triplet markings (a '3' over each group of three notes) over the final three notes, representing a rhythmic ornamentation.

The permutations that emerged through my practice were an amalgam of theoretically identifiable procedures and intuitive responses to themes and delineated materials.¹⁸⁷ Example 2.18 outlines the first few bars of a well know theme and two subsequent permutations.

¹⁸⁷ Bogdanovic, *Counterpoint for Guitar*. Bogdanovic's study of motivic metamorphosis is insightful from both a compositional and improvisational perspective.

Example 2.18 Theme from Song of the Chanter (motivic permutations)

Original



Motivic Permutation 1



Motivic Permutation 2



The identifiable rhythmic diminution of the theme in the first permutation morphs into the second permutation. [See *Theme and Pulsations on the Song of the Chanter*, DVD3 – Track: 2] The scored material outlined in this example offers a snapshot of the kinds of variations that were developed through instinctive improvisational responses to an initial referent.

Melodic Variation

A large part of this research involved the execution of very simple tasks like the one represented in example 2.19. The simplicity of these kinds of exercises belies the inherent challenges of developing and varying materials within confined harmonic parameters.

Example 2.19 Scale Development



At times this process felt like trying to fit a square peg in a round hole; the urge to expand outside the framework was constant. As my formative education as a classical guitarist offered no training in improvisation, the skill to execute simple procedures such as this were not embedded in my practice. This research, therefore, has necessitated a process of re-skilling in the fundamentals of musical improvisation. Adding bass accompaniment as in example 2.20 is a further restriction that requires hours of focused repetitive practice to properly internalise the procedure. While my skill in this area has greatly improved through this research, it must be acknowledged that more time is needed to develop the capacity to improvise in a refined and contained way around these simple structures. The ultimate lesson comes through the recognition that in order to transcend ‘outmoded structures’ and create ‘the new’ a more detailed practical understanding of simple contained improvisational procedures is necessary.¹⁸⁸

Example 2.20 Variations with Bass from *Fandango/Espanolets Variations*¹⁸⁹

The image displays three musical staves, each representing a variation of a piece. Each staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat).
 - The first staff has two measures. The first measure is labeled 'Dmi' and contains a melodic line of eighth notes (F4, G4, A4, Bb4, A4, G4, F4) over a bass line of a dotted quarter note F3. The second measure is labeled 'C' and contains a melodic line of a half note Bb4 over a bass line of a dotted quarter note F3.
 - The second staff also has two measures. The first measure is labeled 'Dmi' and contains a melodic line of eighth notes (F4, G4, A4, Bb4, A4, G4, F4) over a bass line of a dotted quarter note F3. The second measure is labeled 'C' and contains a melodic line of eighth notes (F4, G4, A4, Bb4, A4, G4, F4) over a bass line of a dotted quarter note F3.
 - The third staff has three measures. The first measure is labeled 'Dmi' and contains a melodic line of eighth notes (F4, G4, A4, Bb4, A4, G4, F4) over a bass line of a dotted quarter note F3. The second measure is labeled 'A' and contains a melodic line of eighth notes (F4, G4, A4, Bb4, A4, G4, F4) over a bass line of a dotted quarter note F3. The third measure is labeled 'Bb' and contains a melodic line of a half note Bb4 over a bass line of a dotted quarter note F3.

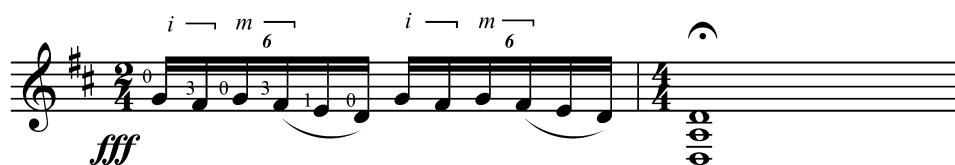
¹⁸⁸ Gary Peters, *The Philosophy of Improvisation*. 18.

¹⁸⁹ This exercises is one of numerous studies that were developed to assist the intergration of melodic improvisation through simple chordal sequences.

Imitative Ornamentation

The kind of morphing that results in new melodic variants and permutations can also lead to the discovery of novel techniques and inventive imitations. One such example is the development of a technical procedure for imitating the *Kora* (African plucked string instrument). The *Kora*-style ornamentation technique is essentially an extension of a prior technique that developed in imitation of Mexican *requinto* ornamentation.¹⁹⁰ By rolling or splitting adjacent thirds in a harp-like fashion the *requintista* (*requinto* player) generates an emotive rhythmic accentuation of the phrase.¹⁹¹ This technique was used in several of my early compositions for solo guitar. The adaptation in Example 2.21 lends an Asiatic quality to the opening chord in *Oceania* (2004).

Example 2.21 Opening phrase of *Oceania* (from The Tyalgum Suite 2004)



While listening to and playing along with West African *Kora* music the technique was exploited once again, this time through a range of pentatonic scale passages. The emergent sounds and textures inspired a range of Afro-inspired improvisation frameworks. [See *Sonica Afro-Trance Suite* – Chapter 3 and DVD5 – Extended Technique Demonstration]

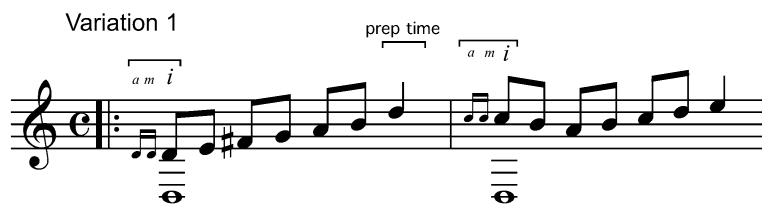
Another instance of borrowing and adaptation can be seen in Example 2.22. Here the usage of standard classical guitar tremolo technique is applied in an approximate imitation of a common Celtic fiddle ornamentation.¹⁹²

¹⁹⁰ Many years studying (1994) and working (1999-2003) in Mexico has led to the absorption of numerous techniques and sounds, particularly from Mariachi and Yucatecan *Trova* styles.

¹⁹¹ This is not a categorical procedural reference. The approach outlined here was assimilated when I lived in Mexico between 1999-2003. The applied technique is a personal interpretation developed from my observations of the Yucatecan *requintistas*.

¹⁹² Denis Cahill and Martin Hayes, *Welcome Here Again*. GLCD1233, CD, 2008. The ornament depicted in example 2.20 was developed while improvising along with this recording. It is an imitative technique not intended to be an authentic representation of Celtic fiddle ornamentation; rather, it was an intuitive response that was internalized, forming part of an evolving aural vocabulary of ornamental devices that are employed instinctively in my own improvisations.

Example 2.22 Celtic Fiddle Ornament



Juxtapositions and Syncretic Morphing: Creating New Tonal Worlds

The juxtapositioning of materials from distinct styles enables, “traits from one genre to influence another”.¹⁹³ This process can be facilitated through frameworks outlining syncretic compositional procedures or can emerge in a reflexive manner through free-style improvisatory experimentation.¹⁹⁴ While the modern context perhaps allows for the juxtaposition of stylistic extremes (e.g. Baroque Heavy Metal or Blue-grass *Flamenco*), the praxis between improvisatory invention and prepared amalgamation is understood to be timeless. In this sense the weird or novel juxtapositions that have emerged through this research are seen as part of a continuum of plucked string practices. The first line in Example 2.23 emerged through a process of unconscious syncretism while the second line was a conscious development of the idea.

Example 2.23 Claw-hammer-style Arpeggios through a *Bulerias Compas* Sequence

Compas beats

Gmi7 Fmi7 A^bM7(13) E^bM7

12 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

Gmi7(M3) Fmi7b5 G7b9

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

¹⁹³ Michael Knoff, “Style and Genre Synthesis in Musical Composition – Revealing and Examining the Craft and Creative Processes in Composing Poly-Genre Music” (PHD diss., Queensland Conservatorium, Griffith University, 2011), 75.

¹⁹⁴ Michael Knoff, “Style and Genre Synthesis in Musical Composition – Revealing and Examining the Craft and Creative Processes in Composing Poly-Genre Music” (PHD diss., Queensland Conservatorium, Griffith University, 2011), 11.

At other times new syntheses emerged in less tangible ways as is evidenced by the scribbled notes on this score in example 2.24.

Example 2.24 Trancing Around a Baroque Framework¹⁹⁵



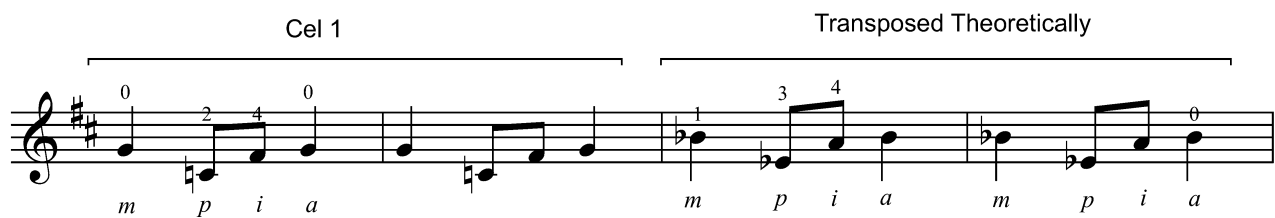
Of all the experimental amalgams that arose during countless hours of improvisation, only a small quantity could be documented, contextualised or developed. Many improvisations, like the one that was occurring at the time these notes were jotted down, became vague memories; the essential qualities and emotional responses that emerged through the process helping to shape my approach overall. The trance-like vibe that is perceived to permeate aspects of my playing is naturally conceived in these moments of experimentation.

This process is reflective of an approach that celebrates a shift in the supremacy of the theoretical toward a growing appreciation for practical experimentation and chance discovery.¹⁹⁶ A tangible example of this can be seen in the development of what could be described as a form of quasi-transposition. Example 2.25 demonstrates a simple transposition of a minor 3rd; the interval structure is in maintained in both phrases.

¹⁹⁵ Jan-Anton van Hoel, *Polyphony and Guitar in Early Music – with an appendix of 29 pieces of the centuries XVI – XVIII*. (Buenos Aires: Ricordi Americana, 1977), 129.

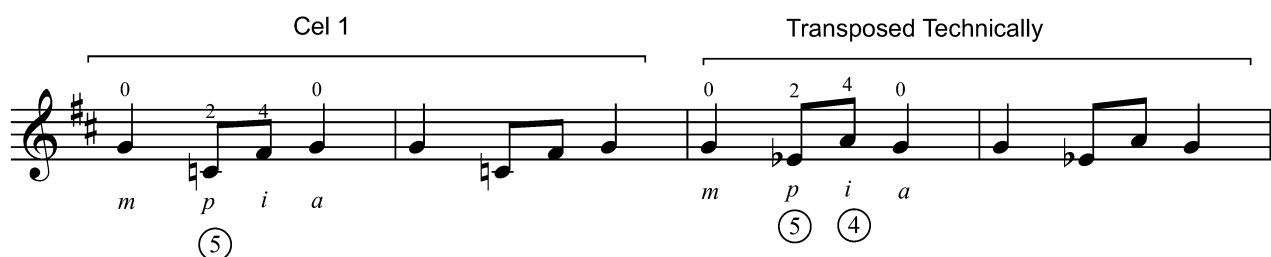
¹⁹⁶ Elliot W. Eisner, *The Arts and the Creative Mind*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 214.

Example 2.25 Theoretical Transposition



As the guitar's unique structural design often lends itself to the incorporation of stopped notes with open strings a distinct approach to transposition often emerged through the improvisation process. Example 2.26 demonstrates the procedure: a simple technical shift, maintaining a single open string achieves a similar yet distinct tonal transposition. While it is generally easier on a technical level to be less theoretically accurate with transpositions the tonal results can sometimes be more interesting.

Example 2.26 Technical Transposition



Larger-Scale Processes

Small-scale syntheses often lead to the discovery of novel techniques, tonal juxtapositions and sonic surprises. Larger-scale concepts and processes such as style and form, also negotiated through the prism of the framework, required a shift in perspective. Form, like content, can be influenced by automatic improvisatory responses to a range of stimuli as well as intellectual processes of planning and development. Both have influenced outcomes in this research. In designing frameworks for specific improvised compositions some consideration was given to how form would manifest. The forms explored in this research mirror the modes of improvisation outlined at the beginning of this chapter: free, integrated and defined. These more general categories of form, represented by traditional descriptors such as prelude, cadenza, fantasy, sequenza, passacaglia, trance-like, free-style, ethereal, abstract etc... have been assigned to each of the frameworks developed throughout this research.

These larger scale constraints act in a similar way to small-scale parameters by placing broader structural limitations on the unfolding improvisation. Assigning the appropriate form for each framework has been an important part of the learning process. For example, improvising variations on a Celtic reel requires harmonic and stylistic continuity across fast tempos; a skill that would take many years of focused playing to master. While a part of my practice attempted to adhere to the rhythmic, harmonic and stylistic constraints governed by a particular style it was often deemed more suitable, aesthetically and technically, to take a free-style/impressionistic approach, with more fluid rhythmic fluctuations and non-stylistic motivic permutations. Becoming aware of the technical constraints and challenges inherent in improvising in different styles resulted in an appreciation for the methods and processes underpinning the Italian *partimento* system. This resulted in more extensive scoring of variations and permutations for some pieces in order to develop a greater capacity to maintain rhythmic and stylistic continuity. (See Appendix I – Selected Scores)

As the theoretical and technical parameters of each new framework required the development of new skill sets, it also became apparent that a degree of systemisation was necessary. While more research is required to achieve this I have come to an understanding that a well-designed and integrated system of fretboard harmony, scales, contrapuntal techniques and rhythm and accompaniment patterns linked to a series of interlocking frameworks is required to navigate the complexities of solo guitar improvisation. This research is viewed as contribution to this process.

In outlining the fundamentals of my approach I have attempted to clarify the processes, concepts, strategies and techniques “which my reflections and experience have made me establish to regulate my own play.”¹⁹⁷ While my practice is informed by ongoing research and development the general characteristics of my approach have coalesced into a personal style of improvisation reflective of the diverse interlocking concepts and musics outlined in this chapter.

¹⁹⁷ Sor, 47.

Chapter 3: An Examination of Selected Improvisations

This chapter chronicles the evolution of selected pieces from conception to performance, outlining key developments that impacted both methodology and practice. Each improvisation was built from a framework or frameworks that included referent materials, aesthetic descriptors and stylistic directives that guided and influenced both preparative development and live performance.

I. Sounds Across Oceans

II. Solea Barroca

III. Prelude, Theme and Variations and Cadenza on O'Carolan's Shi Beg Shi Mhor

IV. Sonica - Afro-Trance Suite

I. Sounds Across Oceans

Example 3.1 Sounds Across Oceans - Original Framework

Trance Morphing *Tranzmorphius*

The score is written on six staves, each containing several measures of music. The notation is a mix of standard musical notation and tablature (TAB). The music is color-coded with blue, green, and orange highlights. The score includes measure numbers 5, 9, 13, 17, 21, and 25. The title "Trance Morphing" is written in a yellow box at the top, and "Tranzmorphius" is written in cursive to the right. The word "TAB" is written vertically on the left side of the first staff.

Measure numbers: 5, 9, 13, 17, 21, 25.

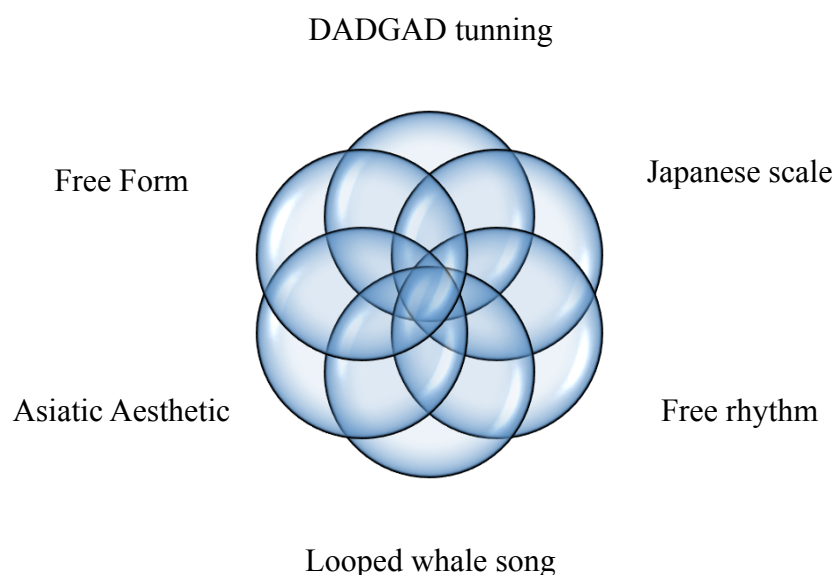
Key features: Blue, green, and orange highlights; TAB notation; Tranzmorphius signature.

Sounds Across Oceans

Conception

Sounds Across Oceans is a work that was first presented at the 2010 Adelaide International Guitar Festival. The initial score depicted above in example 3.1 served as a rough framework for what would be my first improvised solo in a recital context. The piece was re-examined in the context of this research as a way of framing the intercultural experiences I was having performing with traditional musicians in Japan, Thailand and China. These experiences helped to develop an aesthetic sensibility and appreciation for a range of Asiatic instrumental styles in particular, *Isan Phin* (three string Thai folk banjo) from Northeast Thailand, Mongolian horse-hair fiddle and the Japanese shakuhachi (bamboo flute). In re-working this piece I attempted to develop a framework that embraced these connections, to foster an approach to solo improvisation that would be informed by these ongoing collaborative projects.

Figure 3.1 Sounds Across Oceans - Interlocking Elements



The materials for this piece originated in Celtic-style improvisations that led to a series of related frameworks and compositional experiments some of which are contained in *The Celtic Sea – Improvised Suite for Solo Guitar*.¹⁹⁸ The chance discovery of a series of Asiatic-style phrases and scale patterns within the DADAG tuning framework were sketched using tablature notation. (See Example 3.1)¹⁹⁹ From these sketches a series of evocative sounding chord shapes were selected, forming the material framework from which this work was developed. The subsequent transcription of the ‘blue notes’ (no relation to the ‘blue note’ in Blues music) in Example 3.2 reveals an intervallic structure common to that found in traditional Japanese music.²⁰⁰ The rising intervals of a minor second, followed by a major third contained in tonal cell 1 result in the following scale: D – Eb – G – A – D

Example 3.2 Blue Notes Transcribed

The image displays two systems of musical notation for a guitar piece. The top system features a melodic line in treble clef and a corresponding tablature below it. The bottom system also shows a melodic line and tablature, with a box highlighting a specific section labeled 'Tonal Cel 1 (Japanese Scale)'. The tablature uses numbers 0-10 to indicate fret positions on the strings.

¹⁹⁸ Distinct versions of *The Celtic Sea* can be heard on CD2 – Track: 5 and CD 3 – Track: 8.

¹⁹⁹ As DADGAD tuning requires the alteration of three separate strings the rapid scoring of improvised materials in traditional notation is prohibitive and limiting, particularly as the kinds of materials developed are outside a traditional theoretical framework. I have since continued the practice of scoring works with alternate tuning in tablature and traditional notation rather than the using the scordatura system which seems unnecessary in the contemporary paradigm.

²⁰⁰ Koizumi Fumio, *Musical Scales in Japanese Music*. (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1977).

Example 3.3 Japanese Scale Derived from Cell 1

ST M3 T P4

Example 3.4 Three Scale Applied Scale Shapes

Open Position

0 1 0 1 0 1 0 0 1 0 1 3 1 0 0 1 0 1 0 1 0

V Position

6 0 0 0 0 0 6 5 7 5 6 0 0 0 0 0 6 5 7

XII Position

12 13 12 13 12 13 12 13 12 13 12 13 12 13 12 13 12 13 12 13

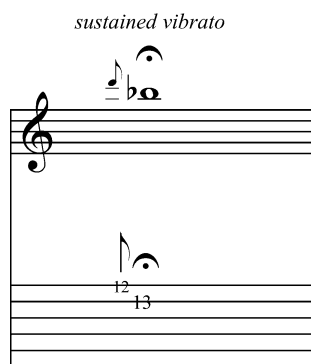
Sounds Across Oceans featured in three recorded recitals throughout this research:

- University of Queensland (UQ) - October 11, 2012 [CD 2 – Track: 1]
- Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA) - August 23, 2013 [DVD2 – Track: 4]
- Soul Space - June 7, 2014 [DVD3 – Track: 6]

While each improvisation was developed from the same material framework, demonstrating similar harmonic vocabularies and aesthetic references, the arrangement and development of the materials is distinct in each performance. This was not characteristic of my approach prior to this research, and is evidence of the impact deliberate improvisational strategies had on my practice.

The majority of the melodic material contained in these improvisations was generated from the three scale shapes outlined in Example 3.3. The ornamental gesture transcribed in Example 3.4 created through a leap of a major third, emerged in imitation of the Shakuhachi and is utilised in a distinct manner in each performance. In the UQ recital this ornament was extended and developed in a free manner. As the improvisation morphs into new tonal territory marked by the ‘orange notes’ shown in Example 3.7, constant, yet brief iterations of this ornament return, functioning like a ‘Shakuhachi leitmotif.’ By contrast, in the WAAPA recital, I make reference to the motif and move in different tonal directions.

Example 3.5 Shakuhachi Reference



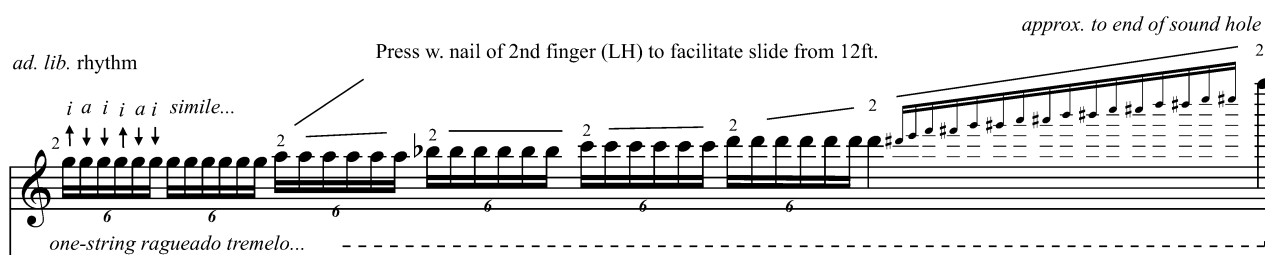
Example 3.6 Ornamental Extension

Example 3.7 Orange Notes Transcribed

A further distinction between the UQ and WAAPA performances was the increased usage of applied *flamenco* techniques. Example 3.8 is a transcription of a one-string *rasgueado* tremelo technique that was developed through a process of adapting traditional *flamenco rasgueado* strumming patterns to one string.²⁰¹ (See Appendix F – Extended Techniques)

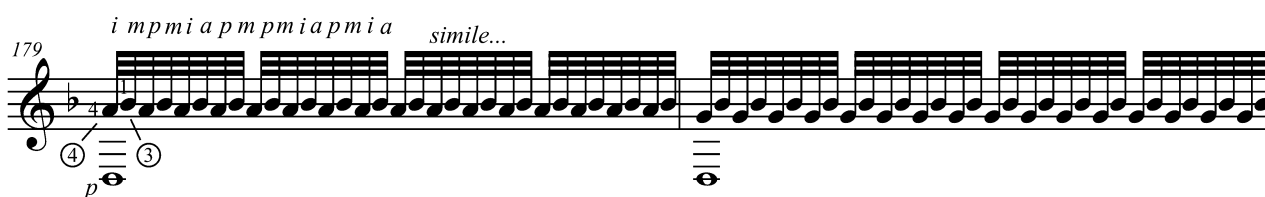
²⁰¹ For a detailed demonstration of this effect see DVD 5 – Extended Technique Demonstration – Track 3.

Example 3.8 One-string *Rasgueado* Tremolo [CD1 – Track: 1]



Detailed analysis of the documented performances revealed frequent instances of this kind of spontaneous, incidental borrowing and adaptation. An interesting observation, which demonstrates the porous nature of my methodology, was the spontaneous incorporation of an ornamental procedure from the first piece in the WAAPA program, an original ‘fixed composition’ for solo guitar, *La Folia*²⁰² in *Sounds Across Oceans*.

Example 3.9 *La Folia* Excerpt – Ornament from Variation 4



This cross-string ornament features at the end of the fourth variation of this composition. Ornaments earmarked for usage in specific contexts must have synthesized in performance, as it was not my intention to utilise this ornament in *Sounds Across Oceans*. [CD1 – Track: 2]

Coda: Whale Song

In developing *Sounds Across Oceans* I drew on the imagery of the ocean as way of connecting the diverse cultures that inspired the aesthetic and material parameters of this improvisation. Experiments with digital processing and looping that informed several new compositions [See *Responsorial* - CD2 – Track: 5, *Western Mindlapse* DVD2 – Track: 6] were adapted and applied in

²⁰² Anthony Garcia, *La Folia*. Self Published. 2007.

the creation of a sonic substrate representing ‘whale song’. [CD1 - Track: 3] The sounds were created live by electronically looping glissando effects using a glass slide.²⁰³

Whilst this was perceived to enhance the compositional texture, a subsequent restructuring of the framework re-designated this effect to serve as an introduction and coda, allowing more space and freedom to extend the solo guitar section. The version of *Sounds Across Oceans* performed in the WAAPA recital was almost twice as long as the UQ version, which may have resulted from a growing confidence in performing improvised music as well as the more open framework. In general terms, the liberal incorporation and development of ornamental arpeggios and harp-like effects along with Shakuhachi references, percussive and extended techniques evoke the abstract narrative implied by the interlocking elements that underpinned this improvisation. The framework, therefore, outlines the character, direction and general form of the improvisation, while applied strategies of variation and development stretch, distort and remold the material into something new.

A contrasting interpretation of the same material emerged in the Soul Space recital. As no amplification was required for this performance I decided to present a version of this piece without digital processing or looping. The electronically looped material was intuitively replaced, in the moment of performance, with an ethereal iteration of the ‘water effect’²⁰⁴ interpolated between harmonics derived from the referent material. This attempt to imitate the watery imagery previously attained through the looped effect resulted in an interpretation of the material that captures some of the previous aesthetic yet frames the piece in a unique manner.

Whilst this adjustment impacted the overall dynamic of this improvisation it is equally likely that a range of other methodological factors contributed to more fluid and focused performance. The initial *shakuhachi* motif, previously identified as a unifying compositional device, was explored more extensively in this performance producing what is perceived to be a more cohesive integration of the delineated referent material. [CD1 – Track: 4]

By identifying more precisely the harmonic material (Orange, Blue, Green notes) contained in the original framework I was able to focus attention on a few thematic ideas, reducing the overall quantity of materials used. (See Example 3.1) This enhanced my capacity to shift between tonal centers more freely; fewer ideas allowed more space to be creative with them.

²⁰³ The looping was generated with the use of a Boss RC-300 LOOP STATION.

²⁰⁴ See Appendix F - Extended Techniques and DVD4 Extended Techniques Demonstration for a detailed explanation and application of the procedure.

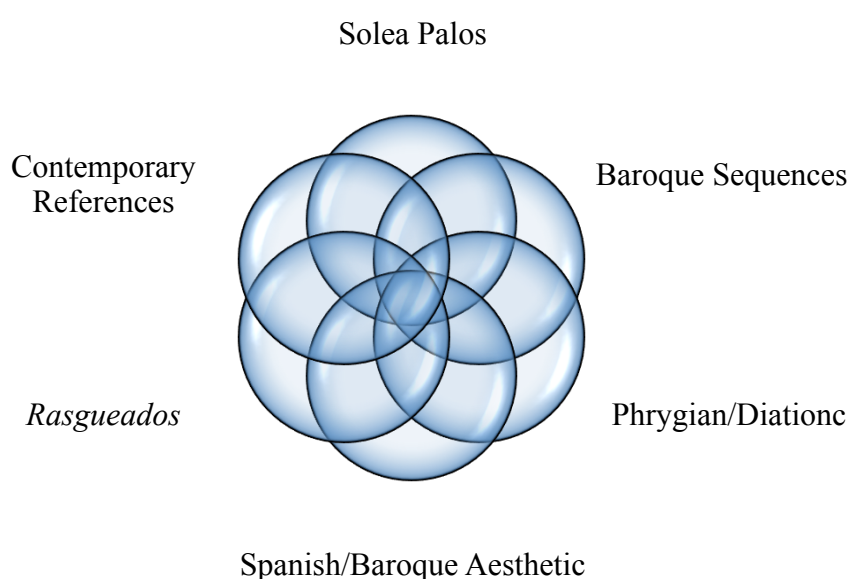
II. Solea Barroca

Improvised Fantasia on the Soleares

Conception

One of the first pieces to be developed through this research was *Solea Barroca*. The material parameters of this improvisation emerged through a cycle of imitation, experimentation, transcription and development. A performance of the *Soleares*²⁰⁵ by Paco Peña, recorded on Dutch TV in 1971, helped ground my aural perception of the *Solea* 'palos' (form) in the traditional *flamenco* style. Peña's interpretation demonstrates rhythmic and harmonic clarity across stylistic elements such as *la llamada*, *rasgueados* and tremolo variations and served as an aesthetic and technical reference in constructing the incorporated framework material for this improvisation.

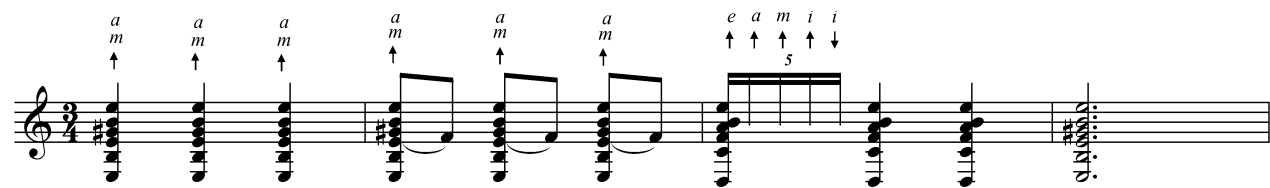
Figure 3.2 Solea Barroca - Interlocking Elements



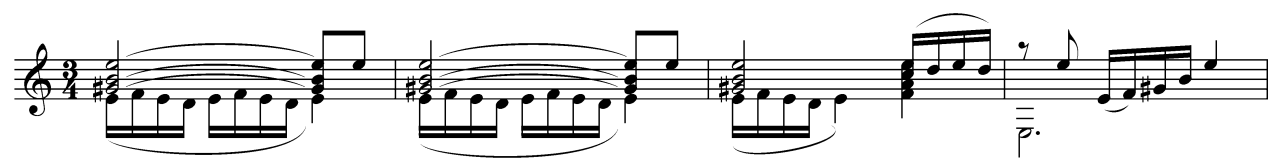
²⁰⁵ Paco Peña, *Solea de Cordoba*. Recorded on Dutch Television in 1971, YouTube, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qGJ9S3Is6lY&feature=player_detailpage. (accessed May 19, 2011).

Example 3.10 Initial Referent Material²⁰⁶

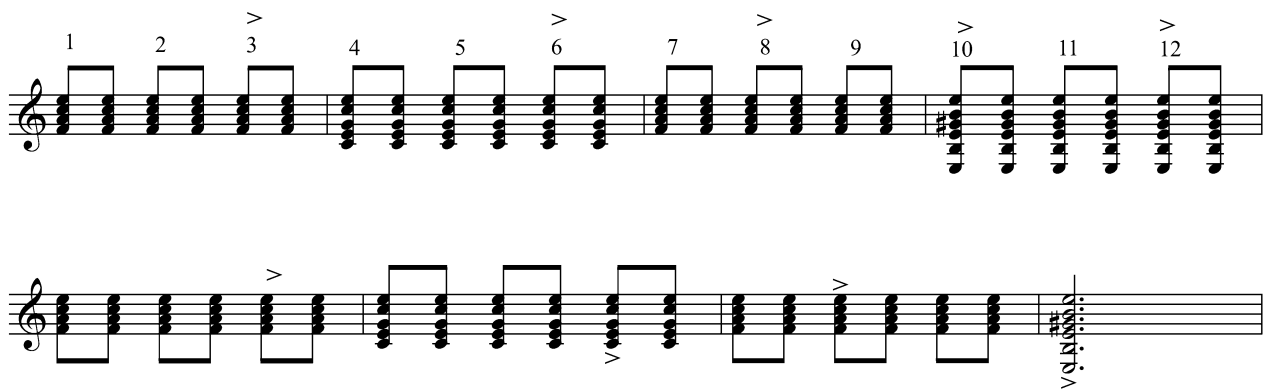
Llamada



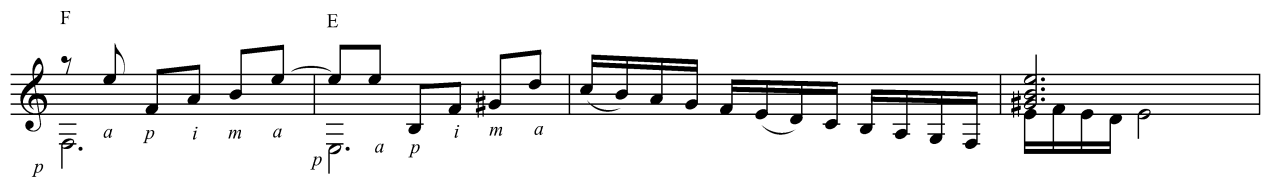
Ligadura



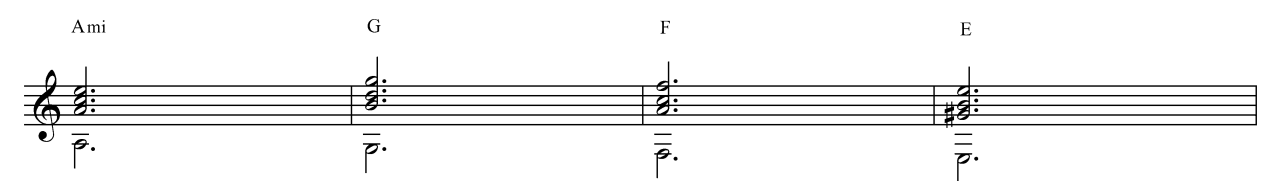
Compas



Falseta Framework



Descending Sequence



²⁰⁶ Denis Koster, *Keys to Flamenco*. 12.

Evolving Framework

The scored material in Example 3.10 outlines common elements of the *flamenco* guitar solo:

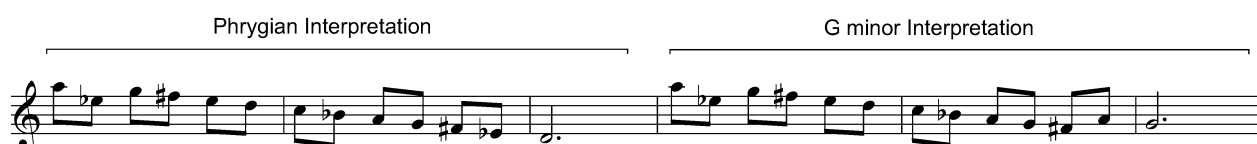
- *Llamada* (the ‘Call’)
- *Ligadura* (Legato phrase)
- *Compas* (rhythmic sequence)
- *Falseta* (composed variations based on the harmonic sequence)
- Descending harmonic sequence

The *llamada* marks the beginning and end of most flamenco guitar solos, and traditionally acted as an announcement to dancers of the next '*palos*' (form).²⁰⁷ In developing this improvisation my intention, initially, was to play in an abstract or free way with the material outlined in example 3.10. Example 3.11 is a transcription of one early response to the material; the chromatic run moves outside the harmonic framework while maintaining the contour of a traditional *fasleta* passage, eventual resolving to the II chord, F major. The E flat and F sharp in this chromatic run suggest potential modulations to G minor and the phrygian mode on D. (See Example 3.12)

Example 3.11 Chromatic *false*ta



Example 3.12 Modulations



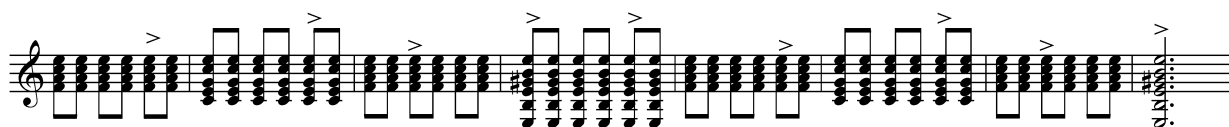
²⁰⁷ Dennis Koster, *Keys to Flamenco*. (NY: PNJ Publications, 1992), 27.

Baroque Elements

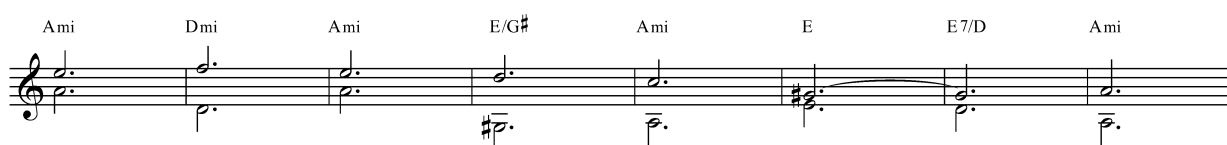
The main preparative strategy used to develop the desired Baroque/*flamenco* synthesis was to intermittently switch between improvised *flamenco*-style passages and Baroque sequences. While *flamenco* sequences generally resolve to the I chord in the phrygian mode, Baroque harmony generally resolves to the i chord in the minor mode. The superimposition demonstrated in Example 3.13 represents the type of conceptual framework that informed subsequent improvisation exercises around these sequences.

Example 3.13 Superimposing Sequences

Basic soleares compas

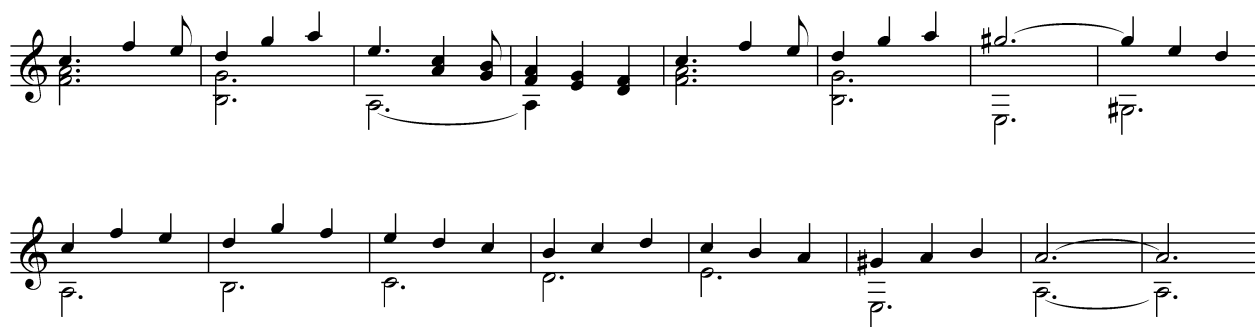


Baroque Sequence



In addition to this procedure, a pre-composed phrase depicted in example 3.14, was interpolated between *rasgueado* passages to help develop the desired stylistic fusion. Iterations of this phrase can be heard in all three performances of this work.

Example 3.14 Pre-composed Baroque-style Phrase



My treatment of the *flamenco compas* generally included *rasgueado* passages interlaced with extended *falseta* passages developed through a contrapuntal framework like the one in depicted in example 3.13. While the options for *rasgueado* strumming are varied and complex they generally unfold in such a way as to emphasise accented beats. My technical approach to *rasgueados* for this improvisation was developed from the five-finger patterns outlined in Denis Koster's method *Keys to Flamenco*.²⁰⁸

Example 3.15 Koster Application



In addition to these, six strumming patterns were identified and applied to the beat divisions outlined in example 3.16.

Example 3.16 *Rasgueado* Applications

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

²⁰⁸ Dennis Koster, *Keys to Flamenco*. 18.

While some of my time was spent practicing these patterns methodically with a metronome more often I would play freely with them, twisting between different combinations, adding melodic and arpeggiated *falsta* passages in an intuitive way. It was never my intention to emulate the style in such a way that could be described as strictly *flamenco* or Baroque; rather, it was to explore the techniques and forms in a personal way through improvisation and see what emerged. Each exploratory moment brought about new interpretations of the material, some reflective of musical styles I was researching and others more experimental in nature. When possible new responses and permutations were scored. (See Appendix I – Selected Scores) Example 3.17 demonstrates the kind of intuitive response that emerged through my improvisations. Often altering a chord shape merely to see what it sounded like would generate an abstract harmonic cluster.

Example 3.17 Transcription of an Improvised Phrase



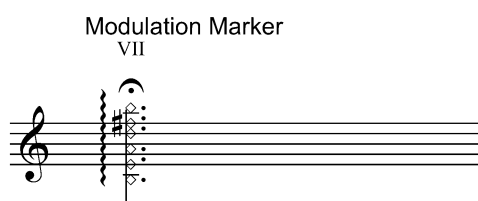
Solea Barroca featured in three recorded recitals throughout this research:

- University of Queensland - October 11, 2012 [CD 2 – Track: 3]
- University of Tasmania – March 11, 2013 [DVD 1 – Track: 6]
- Soul Space Recital - June 7, 2014 [DVD 2 – Track: 3]

Initial interpretations led to the impressionistic style improvisation documented in the UQ recital. A free-style introduction following the general tonal and aesthetic parameters established by the previously outlined referent materials morphed into a *llamada*-like phrase [CD1 – Track: 5], followed by a loose Latin/Baroque-style theme [CD1 – Track: 6] that is quickly subsumed by extended *rasgueado* passages.

An unprepared modulation to G minor generates a sudden shift in mood, tempo and aesthetic which is abruptly interrupted by a harmonic chord strike, transcribed in example 3.18. This was a pre-planned idea (not originally scored) which served to split the sections and allow a pivot from G minor to A minor; the F sharp note in the chord alluding the A melodic minor scale. The ensuing phrase, marked by a hemiola sequence; A minor – B minor – E [CD1 – Track: 7], re-establishes the Baroque-like aesthetic before the final *rasgueado* cadenza closes the improvisation.

Example 3.18 Modulation Marker



On the whole, the UQ interpretation feels like an experimental *rasgueado* fantasy rather than a *soleares*. While this was useful in developing the skill necessary to execute this complex technique, it was understood more work was required to maintain a stronger rhythmic connection to the *solea* form. After much experimentation and reflection the realization came that some forms and styles required different approaches to incorporating improvisation. An impressionistic response to delineated referent material could lead to interesting discoveries but lacked the rhythmic direction synonymous with the *flamenco* style. This stage of my research observed a marked dichotomy in my practice between abstract, spontaneous and responsive modes of improvisation (free) and more developed, planed and refined modes of practice (defined). An overall understanding emerged that much of my improvising was emerging through the former and that a better balance required more attention to the later.

By making the distinction between these modes of improvisation I was able to make adjustments to my approach that came to fruition in the UTAS recital. Scoring and memorising tremelo ideas, working the material through different keys, building chord shape knowledge and learning new *falsetas* gave more coherence to the interlocking elements. This performance, while still representative of a free/impressionistic interpretation of the *flamenco*/Baroque aesthetic demonstrates a better balance of elements. Beginning with an extended *ligadura* sequence the improvisation establishes the form from the outset morphing into a brief contrapuntal phrase before shifting into an extended *rasgueado* sequence. [CD1 – Track: 8]

The addition of an extended tremolo passage further distinguishes this performance, broadening overall the dynamic and tonal palette [CD 1 – Track: 9]. Improvising tremolo passages was not an idea I had conceived of prior to this research. Experimentation subsequent to the UQ recital led to the development of a simple procedure for applying the technique to existing frameworks. The procedure involves the identification and separation of key elements:

1. Harmony (interval or chord shape)
2. Technical options (4 notes: *p, a, m, i* or 5 notes: *p, i, a, m, i*)²⁰⁹
3. Defining the roll of the tremolo (melodic development, treble ostinato, accompanying bass movement or *falseta* ornamentation)

Example 3.19 demonstrates how the technique is applied to a basic harmonic sequence with a five-note tremolo pattern. In this example melodic content is developed over a simple bassline constructed from commonly recognised chord shapes. The melodic movement seen in Example 3.20 enhances the texture of the application.

Example 3.19 Tremolo Interpreting Chords

Example 3.19 shows a musical sequence in treble clef. The top staff displays four chords: A mi, G, F, and E. Each chord is represented by a five-note tremolo pattern. The bottom staff shows the same sequence with the tremolo pattern applied to the chord shape, with a '5' indicating a fifth fret position.

Example 3.20 Melodic Movement in the Upper Voice

Example 3.20 shows a musical sequence in treble clef. The staff displays a series of five-note tremolo patterns, each with a '5' indicating a fifth fret position, applied to the chord shape.

²⁰⁹ While there are more options for tremolo these where two prominent techniques incorporated into this research.

An application of the tremolo technique to a contrapuntal framework can be seen in Example 3.21. While these kinds of applications often emerged through practical experimentation it is unlikely I would have developed the skill to execute this type of procedure without scoring and visualizing the materials.

Example 3.21 Contrapuntal Tremolo

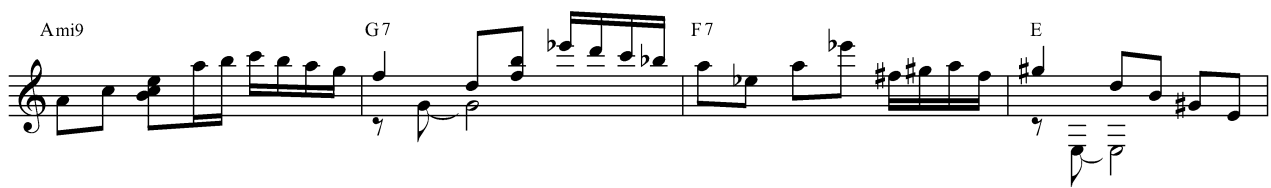
Contrapuntal Shape Deconstructed from the *Gigue from the 3rd Lute Suite* by J. S. Bach

One of the lessons to emerge from both the UQ and UTAS performances was the importance of developing greater rhythmic continuity across a range of diverse elements. This has resulted in the need to develop practical strategies that help integrate diverse techniques and materials in a holistic way. Several strategies for achieving this were explored:

1. Counting *compas* beats while improvising a diverse range of materials.
2. Singing a simple melodic variation while strumming the *compas*.
3. Rapid juxtaposition of Baroque-style and flamenco-style materials.
4. Scoring exercises.

In devising an approach akin to a contemporary *partimento* system the score serves as both a compositional framework and an improvisation methodology. Example 3.21 is an excerpt from a series of similar composed passages. (See Appendix I – *Solea Barroca*)

Example 3.22 Composed *Falseta*



I believe that the Soul Space improvisation is more free-flowing than previous examples, there are interesting differences that belie the methodological preparation that preceded this performance. In particular, the absence of an extended tremelo passage, a technique that was explored extensively in the lead up to the recital, demonstrates the unpredictable nature and variability of my approach to improvisation. My initial reaction, upon review of the documented recording was to see this as a mistake or memory lapse. This response, a remnant of my prior approach to improvisation, where improvised ideas were scored and arranged prior to performance, was still impacting my perception of the improvisation process. This research, however, has facilitated a re-working, not only of my methodology, but my approach to evaluating outcomes as I learn to embrace the natural variability of the improvisation process.

A further observation, upon subsequent analysis of this performance, relates to my capacity to develop improvised passages that represent the desired stylistic synthesis while maintaining rhythmic continuity. A modulation to G minor toward the later part of this improvisation represents an example this is occurring in a more fluid way than previous performances. [CD 1- Track: 10]

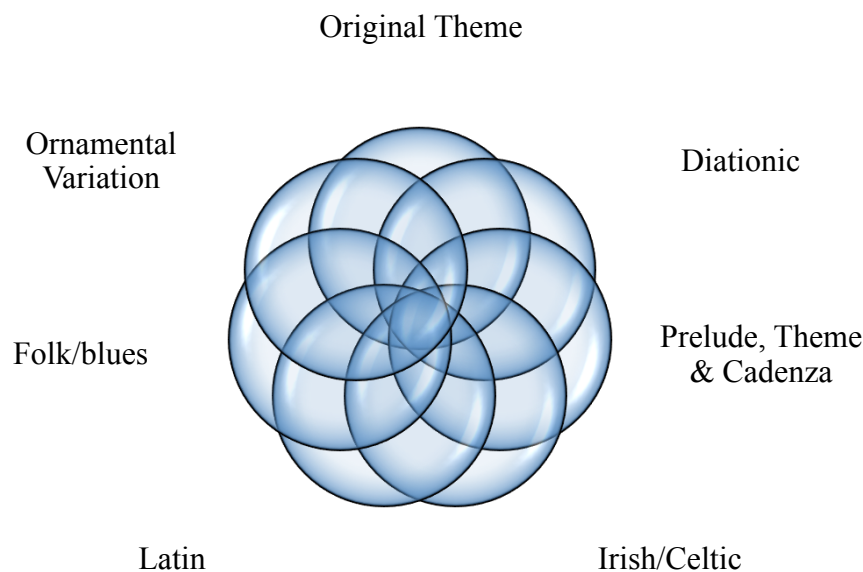
As this research has been an experiment in both process and method, the techniques and procedures underpinning my approach are still fresh and require more time to settle. However, those moments where the synergy of elements generated musical cohesion have helped propel the methodological process; I have come to see where my method is working and can pursue those underlying strategies with increased confidence and focus. One of the most important acknowledgments to make here is that this study has helped me to establish the foundational frameworks, materials and skills necessary to build on my practice in the future, knowing the conceptual work has been done; my focus can now concentrate on application.

III. Prelude, Theme and Variations and Cadenza on O'Carolan's Shi Beg Shi Mhor

Conception

In contrast to *Sounds Across Oceans* and *Solea Barroca*, *Shi Beg Shi Mhor* emerges through a more tightly defined framework developed from an arrangement of Turlough O'Carolan's (1670-1738) original composition, *Shi Beg Shi Mhor*.²¹⁰ This improvisation developed from an exploration of numerous Celtic and Baroque themes and compositions. Initially serving as a framework for practicing two-voice improvisation the theme developed organically over subsequent revisions of the material. During one extended improvisation several distinct original passages emerged in response to the arranged theme. They were subsequently recorded and transcribed, serving as frameworks for the prelude and cadenza that were added to round out the structure of this work.²¹¹

Figure 3.3 *Shi Beg Shi Mhor* - Interlocking Elements



²¹⁰ David Ernst, *The Guitar Atlas Series – Guitar Styles from Around the Globe – Celtic*. (USA: Alfred, ND). 40.

²¹¹ In May of 2011 I attended the Maleny Celtic Winter School as an observer. The courses included classes in Celtic guitar playing. Participants were taught Celtic reels along with simple rhythms and accompaniment patterns. Some of the ideas absorbed here have been adapted and incorporated into my approach to strumming, particularly in improvised arrangements and cadenzas passages on Celtic themes, reels and songs. <http://www.malenyceltic.org/>

Example 3.23 Prelude, Theme and Cadenza Frameworks

Prelude

Emi

4

5

3

3

3

3

3

3

7

G

10

D 9

13

G

D/F#

Emi9

A 79

Theme

D D/F# G Bmi G
 7 A D Bmi G D/F# D/A B \flat dim
 13 Bmi G A D D D D/F#
 20 G D A Bmi G A
 26 Bmi B \flat dim Bmi G D/F# G A D D

Cadenza

The musical score is written in D major (two sharps) and common time. It consists of eight staves of music, each containing a series of eighth-note runs. The chords indicated above the staves are: D9, Emi9, Bmi6, G, Bmi6, Emi9, Emi, D/F#, Emi9, Emi, G9, Emi9, G, and Ad lib. coda. The piece concludes with a double bar line and the word "Fine".

1 D9 Emi9

3 Bmi6 G

5 Bmi6 Emi9

7 Emi D/F#

9 Emi9 Emi

11 G9

13 Emi9

15 G Ad lib. coda Fine

Shi Beg Shi Mhor featured in two recorded recitals throughout this research:

- University of Tasmania – March 11, 2013 [DVD1 – Track: 6]
- Soul Space Recital - June 7, 2014 [DVD2 – Track: 6]

Both performances of this work were developed from the frameworks outlined in example 3.23. The material was developed in live performance through the application of extended ornamentation and melodic variation alongside new spontaneously generated content developed through more impressionistic interpretations of the referent material. If, prior to this research, these materials were deemed interesting or worthy of development, they would have been structured into an original composition inspired by O'Carolan's piece. By contrast, the approach being explored through this experiment allowed space for ideas to emerge, interact and impact the musical unfolding in the moment of performance. In this sense improvisations built on themes like this feel more like collaborations, even though they manifest in the solo context.

The first performance of this work demonstrates several important aspects of my method unfolding in action. Cross-string ornamentation and ornamental strumming and arpeggiation appear with regularity alongside stylistic references in the form of brief iterations of Mexican folk, blues and country-style licks. These 'sonic surprises' generate the kind of spontaneity and playfulness this research was designed to foster. After the first iteration of the theme several variations unfold maintaining the basic shape of the original framework.

The referent material contained in the prelude functions both as an aesthetic prompt and a technical guide for the ensuing improvisation. Towner's remarks that "the potential for variation is established in the first few events of your music"²¹² equate with the approach taken here with the opening phrase setting the tone for the entire improvisation. While there are shifts away from the outlined harmony, my perception of the form, anchored in the memorized prelude material helped maintain a sense of continuity across different versions of this piece. An example of this is clearly demonstrated in the UTAS recital [CD1 – Track: 11] where new material drifts away from the referent harmony and morphs back to the opening arpeggio theme.

²¹² Ralph Towner, *Improvisation and Performance Techniques for Classical and Acoustic Guitar*. 6.

While the Soul Space performance begins with a more exact iteration of the delineated prelude material [CD1 – Track: 12] a more elaborate cadential passage can be heard in the lead up to the first entry of the main theme. [CD1 – Track: 13] The ensuing variations of the theme maintain a connection to the original material but are stretched and manipulated in a way that reflects the aesthetic established by the prelude. This is perceived to lend a personal original touch to both performances of this work, reinforcing the underlying goal of this research to develop a personal voice through improvisation that emerges through the manipulation of historical forms and practices.

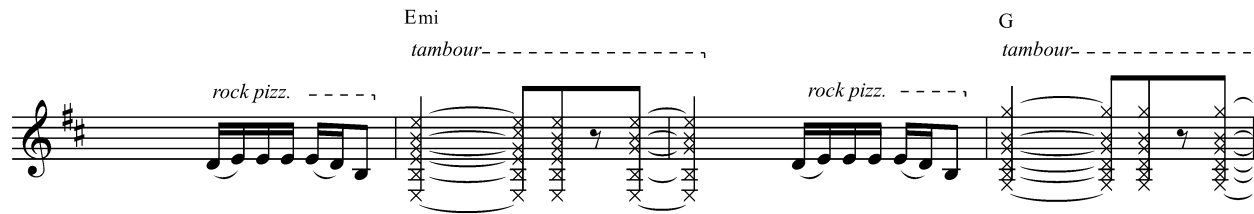
The ensuing cadenza passage naturally contributes to this process as I allow myself to elaborate on the material in a more expansive manner. This equates with MacKillop's interpretation of the cadenza which could "be usefully compared to a dream, in which events that have been compressed into the space of a few minutes, make an impression, yet lack coherence...[it should sound] as though it just occurred to the performer."²¹³ While some of the cadenza material that emerged in both performances did, in fact, occur to the author in the moment of performance much of the material was developed through the variation of delineated referent material.

An other interesting idea I have subsequently referred to as an 'Americana' reference seemed to come 'out of the blue' in the UTAS recital. The approximate transcription in example 3.25 [CD1 – Track: 14] demonstrates a mix of rock-style palm muting (*rock pizz.*) with percussive tambour effects indicative of the Americana style.²¹⁴ While this material interrupts the general flow of the cadenza it also lends it a unique and spontaneous character. Ideas, such as these have been integrated into subsequent editions of the framework material. (Appendix I – *Prelude, Theme and Variations and Cadenza on Shi Beg Shi Mhor*)

²¹³ Rob MacKillop, "Some Introductory Remarks on 19th Century Performance Practice - Part II – Improvisation." (2003), <http://robmackillop.files.wordpress.com/2011/01/some-intro-pii2.pdf>. (accessed March 20, 2012)

²¹⁴ The Americana Music Association, "What is Americana?" <http://americanamusic.org/what-americana>. (accessed July 27, 2014). Americana generally refers the contemporary amalgam of American country, Celtic, Blues and roots styles. The Americana Music Association website defines Americana as "a distinctive roots-oriented sound that lives in a world apart from the pure forms of the genres upon which it may be drawn."

Example 3.24 Americana Reference



An further observation to emerge through subsequent analysis of the two performances highlights subtle methodological differences relevant to the overall direction of my practice. While more time and experience playing with the framework material led to more fluid variations of the O'Carolan's theme in the Soul Space recital a degree of spontaneity marked the UTAS performance. This is seen as an interesting juncture between an approach that adheres more closely to a framework and style and one that pulls away from conformity toward originality. Listening back to my improvisations I can almost hear myself thinking through some passages, 'what chord comes next, how do I get there?' The high level of concentration required to maintain connection to form and style is contrasted by the freer more spontaneous mindset necessary to imagine and create new forms and ideas.

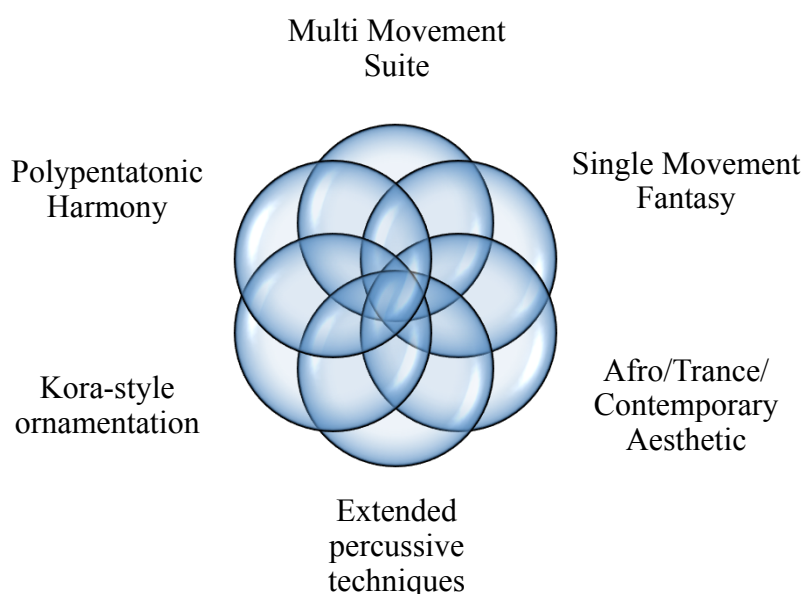
IV. *SONICA*

AFRO-TRANCE SUITE and FANTASY

Conception

Sonica, another of the early improvisations to be explored in this research, emerged as an instinctual response to a range of encountered African musics and their underpinning harmonic and rhythmic pulsations.²¹⁵ Rather than developing a framework from specific transcribed performances or arrangements my approach was to listen and play along with the music of well know artists such as Ali Faka Toure and Jean Bosco Mwenda as well as with a range of unknown amateur practitioners through countless hours researching African guitar styles on YouTube. Magical discoveries of musicians playing traditional music on both the *kora* and the classical guitar inspired my initial improvisations which reflected a very free and abstract amalgam of responses to the music. From this, a *kora*-style ornamental technique (DVD4 – Extended Techniques) was developed and incorporated into a pentatonic study comprising a series of newly devised harp-style scale shapes. (See Appendix A – Scale Shapes, p. 124) From these experiments a theme (depicted in example 3.25) emerged that would become the central framework for ensuing improvisations.

Figure 3.4 Interlocking Elements



²¹⁵ Jim Chapman, “Afro No-Clash – Composing syncretic African/Western music: eleven compositions and the frameworks for their systematic analysis.” (PhD diss., Queensland University of Technology, 2007), 36.

Example 3.25 *Sonica* Theme

Sonica

Theme

Theme

5

9

13

17

21

Sonica featured in four recorded recitals throughout this research:

- University of Queensland - October 11, 2012 [CD2 – Track: 2]
- University of Tasmania – March 11, 2013 [DVD1 – Track: 6]
- Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts - August 23, 2013 [DVD2 – Track: 2]
- Soul Space Recital - June 7, 2014 [DVD 2 – Track: 6]

One of the challenges in developing an approach to improvisation that traverses a wide range of forms and styles is that I am constantly required to assimilate and integrate new technical applications in a way that may not have been explored in quite the same way before. This absorbs energy and time that could be used extending and developing existing techniques. The theme depicted in Example 3.25 is an example of this. It is a particularly complex technique to execute as it requires the first, second and third fingers of the left hand to articulate the arpeggiated accompaniment leaving available only the fourth finger to sound out melodic ideas in the treble voice. In separating the arpeggio notes by immediately removing the finger from the string after the note is sounded the rhythmic pulse is intensified creating a hypnotic percussive effect. The technique when incorporated with melodic movement creates two voices in what was, for me, new and technically distinct. Interestingly, while the applied technique flowed easily when it emerged through the improvisation process it required much work to reintegrate later. In this context, I had to shift my approach to that of an interpreter learning a new idea for the first time.

The first performance of *Sonica* brought into focus the challenge of integrating pre-composed ideas with freely improvised content. The resulting complexity is evident as I attempt to respond to the theme with interpolated ornamental passages while maintaining a connection to the overall direction and pulse. [CD1 – Track: 15] It was during these moments that I became acutely aware of need to balance multiple tasks while simultaneously keeping “an overview of the total proceedings and the overall impact.”²¹⁶

²¹⁶ Ralph Towner, *Improvisation and Performance Techniques for Classical and Acoustic Guitar*, (21st Century Book Productions, 1985) 34.

The first adjustment I made to assist this process was to separate key elements of the first improvisation and develop a multi-movement framework. The UTAS recital featured a reworking of the material into a four-movement suite:

- 1st Movement – Original Theme
- 2nd Movement – Percussion Section
- 3rd Movement – 7/8 Vamp
- 4th Movement – Recap of Theme

While each movement was earmarked for the application and development of specific predetermined techniques, rhythms and harmonies my approach was still fairly free. The percussion section evolved out of the spontaneous insertion in the UQ recital of the *gamelan* technique [CD1 – Track 16].²¹⁷ Subsequent analysis of the recording earmarked this effect as a potential area for development. The resultant methodological adjustments that informed the UTAS performance of *Sonica* helped to create, in my opinion, a much more grounded and cohesive improvisation. This can be observed in the way the percussion section is developed. [CD1 – Track: 17] The inclusion of another section, the 7/8 Vamp, designed as a rhythm study to accompany ongoing experiments in pentatonic improvisation, began as a simple riff in two keys depicted in Example 3.26.

Example 3.26 7/8 Vamp

Part I

Part II

²¹⁷ Anthony Garcia, *Malili Dreaming*. Self published, 2004. The *gamelan* effect is a string crossing technique developed in imitation of a *Balinese gamelan* orchestra. The procedure has been subsequently adapted and applied to the percussion section of *Sonica*. (See DVD 5 – Extended Technique Demonstration)

This riff sets the rhythmic and harmonic framework for the interpolation of the pentatonic *falseta* passages heard in the UTAS recital. These passages maintain the pizzicato effect throughout, at times morphing into blues-like riffs and Montgomery-esque octaves.²¹⁸ [CD1 – Track: 18]

Improvising pentatonic material outside the context of the jazz and blues idioms was a relatively new experience for me. Resultantly, as the time of the UTAS recital, my improvisations naturally drew on previously absorbed and assimilated ideas. Fewer of these kinds of references emerged in subsequent performances as I strove to create a more African-style aesthetic.

While a similar multi-movement approach to this piece was utilised in the WAAPA recital the outcomes are distinct in several ways. Firstly, the WAAPA performance began with an ethereal free introduction which emerged without forethought in the moment of the performance [CD1 – Track: 19] and secondly, an extra movement was added to the overall framework. A further distinction was the unique ordering of the movements:

- 1st Movement – Introduction
- 2nd Movement – 7/8 Vamp
- 3rd Movement – Percussion Section
- 4th Movement - Trance Sequence in A minor
- 5th Movement – Original Theme

A number of African singer/guitarists whose repetitive, lilting style reflected the trance-like aesthetic I was searching through this improvisation inspired the added fourth movement. A representative sample of this research can be heard both in Jean Bosco Mwende's recording, *Masanga*²¹⁹ and a video of two Malian guitarists improvising and singing together in a rural setting.²²⁰

²¹⁸ This colloquial term would be well understood by many jazz guitarists. It refers to Wes Montgomery's pervasive use of octaves in his improvisations.

²¹⁹ Jean Bosco Mwenda, *Masanga*. YouTube. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XkJFfn6avSo> (accessed, April 24, 2012)

²²⁰ African Music, *Improvisation à la guitare à Bamako (Mali)*. YouTube. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IKCWgFxAJTY&feature=related> (accessed, June 15, 2013)

In attempting to imitate this music I developed the framework depicted in Example 3.27.

Example 3.27 A minor Trance-Vamp

The musical score for 'A minor Trance-Vamp' is presented in five staves. The first staff shows the harmonic progression: A minor (Ami), G, C, and G, each in a different time signature (8/8, 3/4, 6/8, 3/4). The second staff shows a melodic line in 8/8 time, consisting of eighth and quarter notes. The third staff shows 'LH Tapping' (left hand) with a circled 6, and 'LH bongo-style percussion on sound board' with a circled 1. The fourth staff shows a melodic line with fingerings: 3, 2, 0, 2, 3, 1. The fifth staff shows a melodic line with accents 'a m i' and 'a m i' above the notes.

The repetitive harmonic sequence and hemiola rhythmic pattern were designed to restrict the parameters of this improvisation in a way that was not natural to me at the time. In the WAAPA recital I interpolated percussive effects between strummed passages that strictly followed the harmonic sequence outlined in the framework, gradually introducing more melodic content as the piece progressed. [CD1 – Track: 20] While I am pleased with the overall effect of this improvisation certain passages highlight my propensity to wander outside the parameters of the framework. This can be seen in this performance as I drift into different chord sequences, extended melodic runs and arpeggios gradually finding my way back to the original vamp. [CD1 – Track: 21]

Trying to stay within this kind of framework in live performance is hair-raising, though exhilarating when it works. While more time is certainly required to develop my skill in this area this research has tested my capacity for improvisational restraint, ultimately leading to an embodied understanding of the inherent complexities and joys of this kind of approach.

The Soul Space recital featured the last documented interpretation of this piece. The result was another contrasting improvisation that moved amorphously through three of the previously incorporated movements: 7/8 Vamp, percussion section and *Sonica* theme, without extended pauses. The extended pizzicato riff at the end of the 7/8 Vamp, for example, trails off into a chromatic run that ends in a final E note. This note anticipates the ensuing *gamelan* strike, which, in turn, marks the beginning of the percussion section of the improvisation. [CD1: Track 22]

In effect the form of this improvisation returned to the original abstract fantasy first presented at the University of Queensland recital. The coalescence of methodological insight, technical development and performance experience, however, gave this performance more depth, composure and overall continuity. The return to the abstract form for this interpretation is not regarded as the better approach overall, rather, it is seen as a distinct way of interpreting the material, which directly benefited from time spent previously exploring the material in a more structured way.

Chapter 4: Shifting Perspectives: Reflections and Observations

The shift in my performance practice approach from the interpretation of ‘fixed music’ inspired by improvisatory practices, toward what could be described as a form of ‘spontaneous performative composition’, created an awareness of the multiple processes that must be negotiated to create a successful improvised work in performance.²²¹ My capacity to acquire knowledge in the form of new techniques, patterns and forms and channel those in a reflexive way through predetermined frameworks has been greatly enhanced throughout this research, ultimately leading to the emergence of a personal methodological framework for solo guitar improvisation. This has not, however, been a smooth or linear learning process. As much as I attempted to rationally frame my ideas, the performative act can be unruly.²²² The best laid plans and preparation can be subverted in the moment of performance through distractions, expressive urges and emerging conflicting ideas that are difficult to control or articulate.

The emotional responses that emerged during heightened moments of improvisational activity were bookended by intellectual processes of interpretation, analysis and reflection. This had a formative impact on my approach as I endeavoured to translate my experiences into a coherent conceptual framework and method that could reproduce expressive creative outcomes in performance scenarios. The interpretive process highlighted the methodological challenges I faced in determining which strategies should be developed and which were to be discarded. When, for example, a peak experience accompanied an extended free improvisation (unfolding without imposed strictures or governed by predetermined frameworks) I might think, ‘this is the way to improvise,’ at other times a less positive emotion may emerge in response to the same improvisational strategy.

Initially, this process produced doubt and confusion. It wasn’t until I began to develop a tolerance for the inherent perplexity of improvisation that I learnt to drop ideas in the moment without discarding them entirely.²²³ In this context, the repetition of ideas gave way to experimental curiosity, as I twisted and turned between styles, shapes and forms. While this is perceived to foster positive creative outcomes in the long term, it often achieves less tangible results in the short term. This equates with Gustavson’s perspective that one must “come to terms with *deferred*

²²¹ Tord Gustavson, “The Dialectical Eroticism of Improvisation,” In *Improvisation – Between Technique and Spontaneity*. Ed. Maria Santi, (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), 11.

²²² Brad Haseman, *A Manifesto for Performative Research. Media International Australia incorporating Culture and Policy, theme issue “Practice-led Research”* (no. 119): pp. 98-106.

²²³ Maria Santi, *Improvisation – Between Technique and Spontaneity*. 5.

gratification...[for] without challenging encounters with obstacles and resistance, we will not build independence and skills in problem solving.”²²⁴

The contingencies of performance, therefore, necessitated a balancing of defined and free modes of improvisation as I learnt to change tack without misinterpreting less successful outcomes as emerging from a wrong method or approach; the method might not have been suited to a given context but when revisited within a different framework or scenario could produce more positive results. This seems to equate with Sor’s maxim, “to hold reasoning for a great deal, and routine for nothing.”²²⁵

A fundamental shift in approach transpired throughout the later stages of this project as I began to discern when to stop thinking, analysing and scoring and just improvise. As a composer and performer of ‘fixed music’ there was an inherent tendency to stop and write down every discovery that transpired through the improvisation process. While scoring materials is essential in capturing ideas, improvisation requires a commitment to the “the pure futurity of the now,”²²⁶ where the experience of musical exploration was the beginning and the end of the process. Negotiating, therefore, the multiple technical and theoretical tasks and layers of thinking alongside this understanding was also challenging. In time I came to understand that from an improvisational perspective a mistake (a dreaded word for many Classically trained musicians) could be “treated as a musical choice, rather than an error, which [could] then be then be incorporated into an overriding musical statement.”²²⁷ This understanding, along with a range of other factors that helped balance intellectual and expressive thought processes were identified through this research: they have been collated into a set of principles that are perceived to underpin optimal performance outcomes. Adhering to these principles is a work in progress.

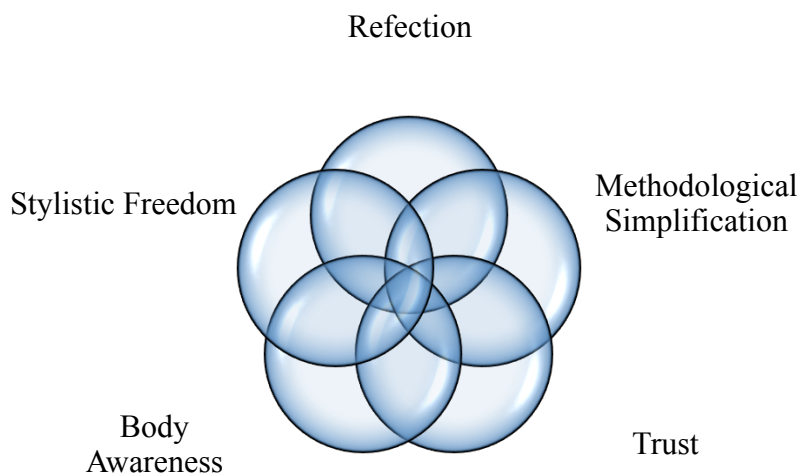
²²⁴ Tord Gustavson, 23.

²²⁵ Fernando Sor, *Complete Method for the Spanish Guitar*. 48.

²²⁶ Gary Peters, *The Philosophy of Improvisation*, 18.

²²⁷ Nicholas Hayward, “Complexity Through Interaction – an investigation into the spontaneous development of collective music ideas from simple thematic materials.” (PhD diss., University of Tasmania, 2014), 63.

Figure 4.1 Five Principles of Optimal Performance



1. Reflection

By its nature the reflective process necessitates a balance between critical or evaluative thinking and conceptual thinking. The need to define and differentiate these types of thinking emerged in an attempt to unpack the methods and strategies that were perceived to foster optimal outcomes in my performance practice. While conceptual thinking relates to one's "ability to understand a situation or problem by identifying patterns or connections,"²²⁸ critical thinking "consists of mental processes of discernment, analysis and evaluation."²²⁹ While the two are interrelated there are subtle differences that, in the opinion of the author, had distinctive impacts on my practice.

The critical evaluation of my playing was seen as fundamental in discerning how I could improve my practice overall. While analysing a recorded performance or evaluating the efficacy of a particular technical application, my critical reflections led to the kinds of methodological developments and adjustments that were referred to in Chapters Two and Three. The decision, for example, to develop contrapuntal shapes or to score and memorise extended variations, came from an understanding that methodological or technical deficiencies needed attention. Evaluating my playing in this way, however, would sometimes stop the creative flow of an improvisation. It was in these moments that I discerned the need to reflect on my practice in a different, less critical, way.

²²⁸ Psychology Wiki, "Conceptual Thinking," http://psychology.wikia.com/wiki/Conceptual_thinking. (accessed May 23, 2014).

²²⁹ Psychology Wiki, "Conceptual Thinking," http://psychology.wikia.com/wiki/Critical_thinking. (accessed May 23, 2014).

In more expressive contexts it was deemed necessary to play on through perceived dilemmas maintaining attention on the broader unfolding of an improvisation to gain a conceptual overview of the process. While I was still observing underlying technical and musical processes I would allow my thoughts to pass and fade from consciousness; to refrain from questioning what I was doing. Though I might notice a mistake, sense a rhythmic imbalance or bizarre fusion of elements, my focus would remain centered in the act of improvising. Though momentary reflections may have had a critical slant, I learned not to judge; to let things play out as best they could. At times, this would generate greater clarity and musical flow and lead to the kinds of conceptual insights that also helped shape my methodology.

2. Methodological Simplification

Another important lesson to emerge through this research relates to the importance of methodological simplification. As a soloist there can be an urge to generate complexity as a substitute for the larger sounds and textures created by an ensemble. As this research progressed it became increasingly apparent that simplicity of approach was more conducive to a successful improvisation than undue complexity. In integrating this lesson I turned to the development of very simple exercises and studies; a concept that seems to be in keeping with the principles governing the practice of *partimento*. On this subject Sanguinetti states that

The sharp distinction between Art (inspired by the spirit) and the exercise (mechanical and uninspired, thus devoid of any real content), typical of the idealistic ideology, was not yet operating in eighteenth century musical culture.²³⁰

Methodological precursors, such as this, influenced the design of simple exercises and studies that have, over time, augmented my capacity for stylistic restraint and helped build the mental architecture necessary to integrate musical schemas (excerpts and variations) into an evolving vocabulary of shapes and techniques applicable to the classical guitar. This process helped to counter conceptual dilemmas that sometimes resulted in technical, theoretical or conceptual confusion, a loss of musical direction and overall cohesion. While these moments were challenging, they were invaluable formative experiences

²³⁰ Giovanni Sanguinetti, “Thorough Bass as Music Theory”, *Partimento and Continuo Playing in Theory and Practice - Collected Writings of the Orpheus Institute* edited by Dirk Moelants. (Leuven University Press, 2010), 71. Prior to this research simple exercises or studies, playing over an Am – E chord sequence for example, seemed less creatively stimulating, and therefore, less relevant to an approach that was centered in a exploration of ‘the new’. This limiting perception has now been overturned, and a renewed appreciation and understanding of the role of simple studies has emerged.

that gradually fostered an appreciation for simplicity and a sense of patience with the overall process.

3. Body Awareness

Over time, it became evident when something was not working that either conceptual or technical problems were at play. Striving and pushing through challenges can sometimes achieve results but often it was necessary to walk away. Sometimes, “it is easier to enhance creativity by changing conditions in the environment than by trying to... think more creatively.”²³¹ In doing this, I would walk away, stretch, change stylistic direction, listen to music or sight read excerpts from the repertoire. Often, upon returning to the previous task, studying a particular contrapuntal technique or *rasgueado* pattern, for example, a sense of flow would return.

At other times a different approach was explored. One technique that was utilised in an attempt to balance intellectual, emotional and physical energies was to have short mini-breaks (less than a minute), like a pause between parts of a multi-movement work. During these pauses I would place my attention on my breath, allowing the body to relax and release any physical tension that may have built up while playing. This process, essentially the integration of applied mini-meditations (or breathing exercises), also had a positive impact on practice helping me to relax and think more clearly about the task at hand. Whilst these reflections are subjective these practices were perceived to generate more cohesive and musical improvisations. The distillation of this embodied knowledge has led to an understanding that pure intellectual knowledge (theoretical, conceptual, philosophical ideas etc..) can make simple things complex. Conversely, embodied knowledge can make complex things simple; playing ideas into reality is a consequence of this embodied knowledge.

4. Stylistic Freedom

In drawing on the sounds and musics I encounter in my day-to-day life I am finding ways of integrating practices that appeal both to me and hopefully, to audiences. As “most musicians primarily play and compose for non-musicians...shared knowledge must form the foundation for

²³¹ Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*. (New York: Harper Collins, 1990) 1.

appreciation by non-experts of improvisational skill.”²³² The stylistic synthesis explored in this research came from an instinctual choice to develop a personal musical vocabulary that was connected to broader shared languages. In the context of this research, therefore, stylistic freedom refers to a conceptual approach to improvisation that is open to the potential integration and communication of all encountered forms and techniques. Whilst this may seem like a broad and illusive task, improvisational practice seems to have an uncanny way of melding diverse elements into a whole, “like a man walking backwards [the improviser] sees where he has been, but...pays no attention to the future. His story can take him anywhere, but he must still “balance” it, and give it shape”²³³

5. Trust

There would be no need to discuss trust if this research was not accompanied by doubt. Despite all the effort that goes into technical and theoretical development, stylistic representation, form etc. improvisation is a transcendent process where we have to leave behind preconceived ideas (however fundamentally important to the foundation and structure of approach) and let the performative moment guide the process anew. This requires trust in the creative unfolding now as much as it requires trust in the overall research process.²³⁴ Trust, therefore, was forged through the performative act, the moment I decided to let go of technical or theoretical boundaries, evaluative or conceptual thinking and just improvise. Through this process I learned to trust in equal measure the mistakes, lessons, failures and accomplishments and continue improvising knowing that there will always be more to learn.

At the outset of this research I was curious and somewhat mystified by Chuang-tzu’s proverb and the reason for its inclusion in Bogdanovic’s method. It is now clear that ‘without praises, without curses’, refers to non-judgment; we make mistakes and enjoy success, yet the philosophical and psychological contingencies of a given approach, require a certain intellectual equanimity when evaluating our work. ‘Now a dragon, now a snake’, reflects the multitude of roles we can play and paths we can take both in music and in life. In the context of an improvisation methodology the phrase draws our attention to the diverse musical world we inhabit and can integrate in our daily practice. And finally, accepting that ‘you transform with the times, and never consent to be one thing alone’ encourages an open conception

²³² Jeff Pressing, *Psychological Constraints on Improvisation*. In. “In the Course of Performance – Studies in the World of Musical Improvisation”, Ed. Bruno Nettle with Melinda Russell, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), 52.

²³³ Gary Peters, *The Philosophy of Improvisation*. 18.

²³⁴ Nicholas Hayward, “Complexity Through Interaction – an investigation into the spontaneous development of collective music ideas from simple thematic materials.” (PhD diss., University of Tasmania, 2014), 71.

of music-making that embraces change and celebrates diversity.²³⁵

These reflections and observations emphasise the evolving nature of my practice, highlighting key insights that have impacted the conceptual and practical aspects of the examined approach. While the concepts elucidated through this research are still in their infancy, the fundamental principles emerging through my practice offer a framework for understanding my approach; the philosophical threads of which have emerged through the preparation and presentation of improvised music for solo guitar. The research has opened new musical frontiers for me, fostering an appreciation for the rich improvisational heritage of the guitar and revealing the instruments potential for reinvention.

²³⁵ Bogdanovic, *Counterpoint for Guitar*. 100.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

This research was centered in an examination of the processes, methods and practices that underpinned my approach to solo guitar improvisation. At the outset I knew there would be challenges in exploring a practice that is not widely researched and for which my performance experience was limited to ensemble contexts. Consequently, I was drawn into broader fields of research in effort to develop and contextualise my evolving practice. A study of literature on improvisational psychology and process, an examination of Spanish Baroque guitar practices and the discovery of new research on the practice of *partimento* proffered valuable information and knowledge in developing the conceptual framework from which my practice developed. The recorded performances document the impact this research has had on my approach and have confirmed my belief in the importance of developing strong technical and methodological frameworks for the dissemination of improvised music for solo guitar.

The early part of this study was marked by the deconstruction of a prior approach: that of improvising, scoring ideas and structuring ‘fixed’ compositions for performance.²³⁶ Learning to freely improvise, as a soloist in recital contexts, became as much a process of psychological and philosophical transformation as it was an outcropping of technical and theoretical development. This seems to accord with the work of Bogdanovic, Towner and Peters whose research on the process and practice of improvisation runs parallel to broader discourses on the psychology and philosophy of improvisation. Whilst these fields lay at the periphery of this current research the seeds for a future exploration of the interrelation between psychology, philosophy, spirituality and the process of improvisation have been firmly planted.

When my improvisations felt successful there was a sense of flow about my playing. The art of improvisation, in this context, could be defined by the expression, ‘effortless curiosity’. In these moments I was able to bring to the performance scenario an experimental, playful energy, free from the constraints of the ‘fixed music’ interpretive framework that underpinned my solo practice prior to this research. In moments, however, when an improvisation required the extension or development of a particular contrapuntal sequence or genre-specific technique I found gaps in my knowledge base that would require more study, technical and theoretical assimilation and

²³⁶ Anecdotally, using improvising as a tool for discovering and developing materials for ‘fixed compositions’ is a common practice among guitar composers. The difference, therefore, in my approach relates to my decision to take this process into the recital scenario.

experimentation. These more challenging moments, when my improvisations lost direction, helped guide and strengthen my understanding of the importance of simplifying my overall approach.

At its heart, the simplification process emerged from an understanding that frameworks, containing referent material, harmonic sequences, aesthetic descriptors and loose structural markers help integrate and balance technical and theoretical fundamentals with intuitive reflexive expression. While these frameworks and the referent material contained therein are in once sense directive, in that they shape content and promulgate an aesthetic narrative, the process of live real-time performative composition sees the material transformed into something new; the framework becomes an ‘outmoded structure’ which is transcended in the moment of performance.²³⁷

The five recitals that elucidate this research offer a chronological account of my evolving practice. While varying degrees of improvisatory flow and success marked each recital I felt personally, that optimal outcomes increased overtime. The more comfortable I became with the notion of performing improvised music in solo recitals the more at ease I was with overall process. I gradually understood that the key to successful improvisation was not only solid, informed preparation, but having the mindset necessary to respond to the performative situation anew, ‘without praises or curses’.²³⁸

Spontaneous developments impacted the unfolding of my improvisations as ideas connected in ways I could not have conceived of in a preparative sense; preparation was replaced by a more balanced creation. This lesson began to settle in my consciousness in the later stages of this research as I began to learn how to practice in a way that was both theoretically and technically fluid and creatively flexible. The key here was to find a tempo in which all layers and elements could be negotiated in real-time; ironically a goal any guitarist would hope to achieve in the interpretation of ‘fixed music’.

Too much information and choice can lead to excessive mental processing, analysis and reflection. In this situation the overwhelming nature of unlimited choice stultifies the creative process, producing atrophy, creative blockages and confusion. Resolving this dilemma may explain, in part, our contemporary penchant for specialisation and an increased focus on known or accepted

²³⁷ Gary Peters, *The Philosophy of Improvisation*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 18.

²³⁸ Chuang-tzu, “The Inner Chapters” In *Counterpoint for Guitar*. 100.

pathways. The presentation of improvised music, however, is the ultimate counter to this as the contingencies of performance force choice and shape methodological solutions.

Renowned guitarist David Tanenbaum suggests one of the guitars challenges in the modern era is that a mentality of “anything goes...seem[s] to be emerging, there are no moorings, no anchors.”²³⁹ This seems to be the case across many fields, yet the resolution, perhaps, may lie in the way we view the ever-changing contemporary landscape. I am sympathetic to Tanenbaum’s perspective, having experienced this shifting, unstable ground in my own practice and questioned many times the methods being explored in this research. However, intuiting a purpose and a future for these ideas, kept me grounded in the task of presenting and promoting improvisation as a tool for self-expression, composition and teaching; perhaps a sense of balance and integration is on the horizon.

Future Research Pathways

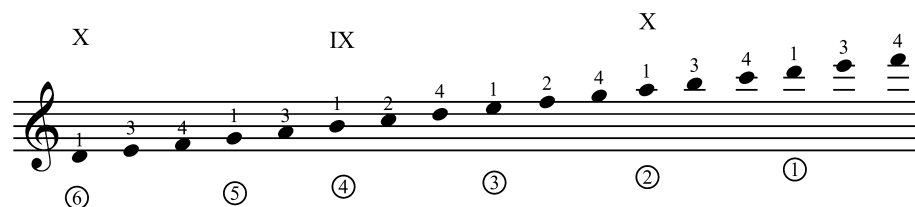
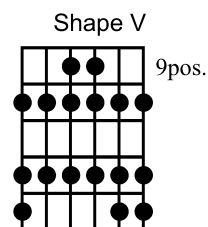
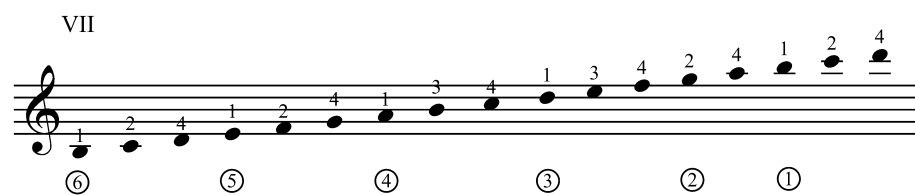
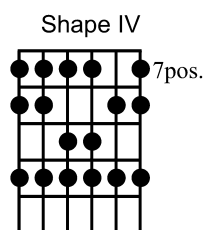
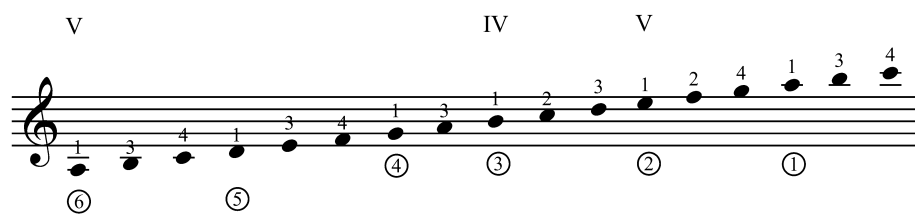
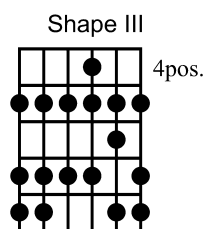
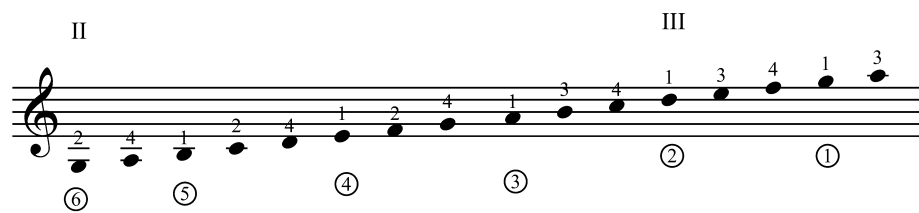
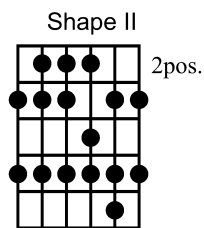
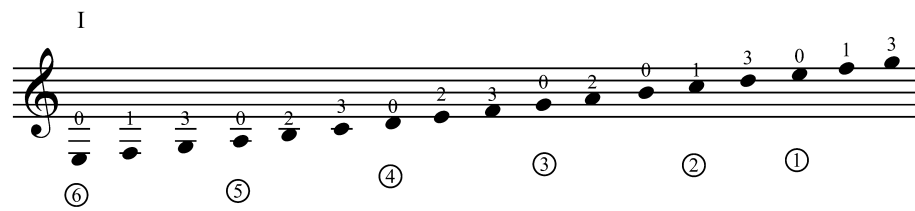
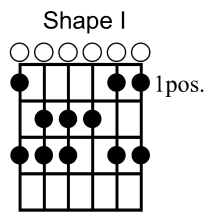
Contemporary research around cultural relevancy, diversity of practice, curricular reform and the economics of music-making is increasingly informing debates around music education policy. As anecdotal evidence suggests wide ranging changes are afoot within many music institutions and organisations, the time is ripe for a rethink around notions of style, genre, performance practice methodology and pedagogy. It is within this context that a reimagining of practices like *partimento* might contribute to ongoing research around pedagogical philosophy and methodology by offering a new kind of “global composition training...through improvisation.”²⁴⁰ The pedagogical implications of Ferand’s assertion that, “the whole history of the development of music is accompanied by manifestations of the drive to improvise,”²⁴¹ cannot be ignored in responding to perceived challenges in music education. The first step in asking how we might offer more is to acknowledge that we can be more open. More open to new research, new ways of thinking about the role of the music and music-making in society and new modes of practice.

²³⁹ David Tanenbaum, “The Classical Guitar in the Twentieth Century.” In *The Cambridge Companion to the Guitar*. Ed. Victor A. Coelho. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 205.

²⁴⁰ Gorgio Sanguinetti, *Partimento and Continuo Playing in Theory and Practice*. 71.

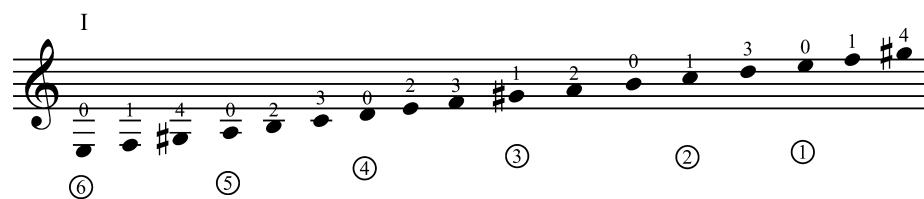
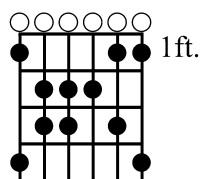
²⁴¹ E. T. Ferand, *Improvisation in Nine Centuries of Western Music*. (Cologne: Arno Volk Verlag, 1961), 5.

Appendix A: Scale Shapes

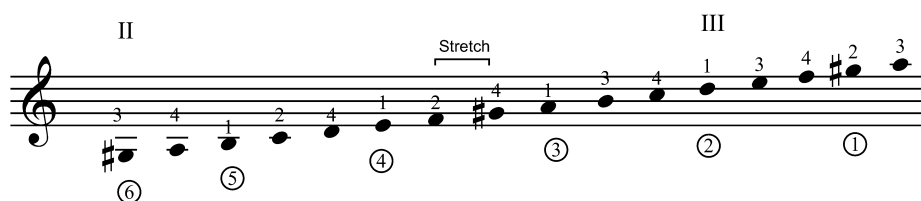
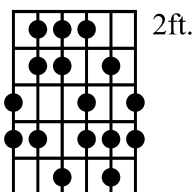


Minor and Phrygian Modal Shapes

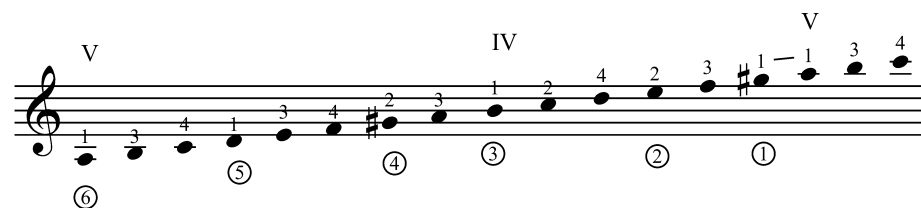
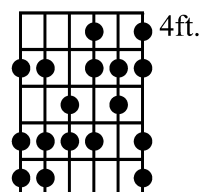
Shape I



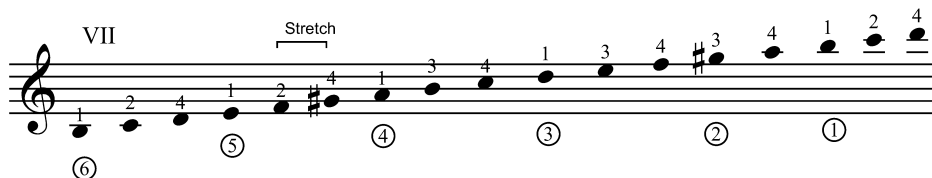
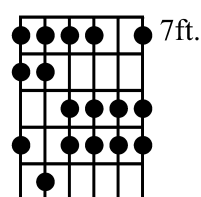
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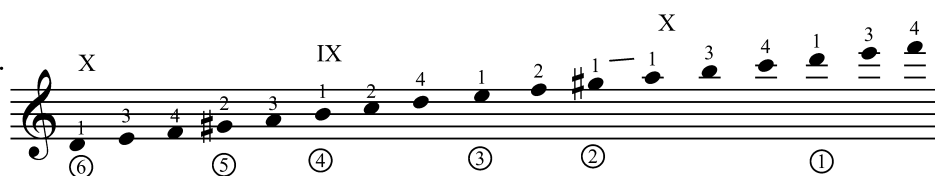
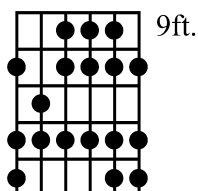
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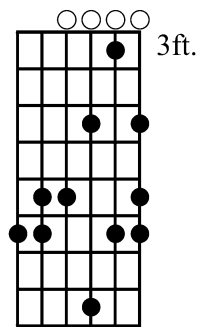
Shape IV



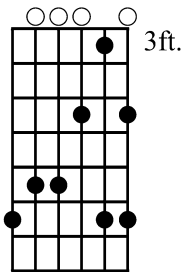
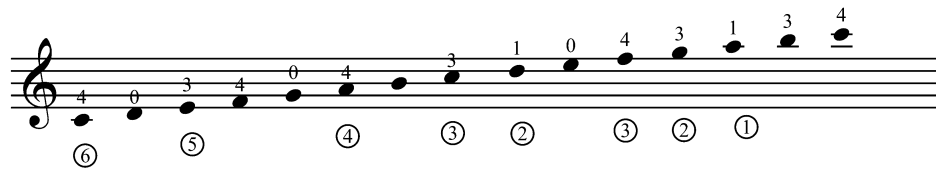
Shape V



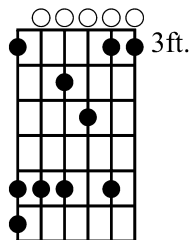
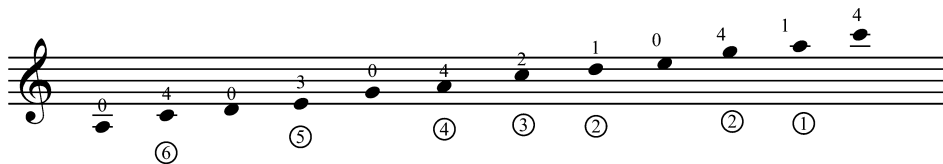
Harp/Cross-String Shapes



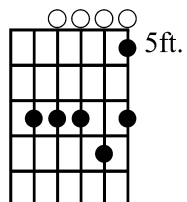
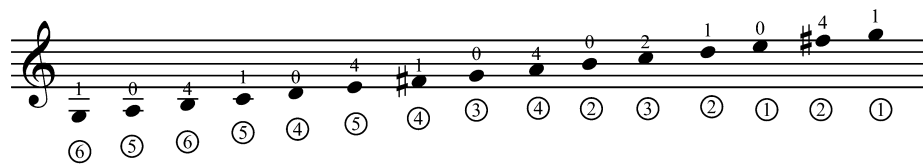
C major



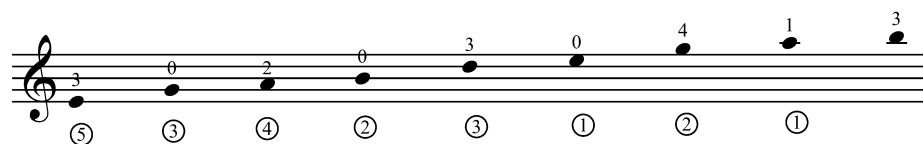
A minor Pentatonic



G major



E minor Pentatonic



Appendix B: Melodic Variation

Separated Arpeggios

The term separated arpeggio has been adopted in describing a technical procedure where right hand arpeggio patterns are deployed in the articulation of melodic variations. By releasing the left hand fingers immediately after each note is sounded the melodic contour of the variation is heightened. A standard approach, whereby arpeggiated notes are held by the left hand in a chord shape configuration, results in resonating harmonies that dilute the rhythmic and sonic articulation of melody; the effects sounds more accompanimental in nature.

Augmenting Right-hand Technical Applications (*p, i, m* or *a, m, i* - three note cross-string pluck)²⁴²

Across the Fingerboard

C

The diagram shows four fretboard grids for a C major triad (C-E-G) at positions 1, 3, 5, and 7. Each grid is labeled '3ft.' indicating a three-fret span. Below the grids is a musical staff in treble clef showing the corresponding melodic line. The staff includes triplets of eighth notes for the first three positions, followed by a 'simile...' instruction and a triplet for the fourth position. Fingerings are indicated as *m* (1st), *i* (2nd), and *p* (3rd) for the first triplet, and *(a)*, *(m)*, and *(i)* for the second triplet.

Rhythmic Permutations

P1 P2 P3 (as ornament) P4 (inverted) P5 P6 (as ornament)

The diagram shows six rhythmic permutations (P1 through P6) of a three-note pattern on a musical staff. P1, P2, and P5 are basic eighth-note triplets. P3 is a triplet with an ornament on the first note. P4 is an inverted triplet. P6 is a triplet with an ornament on the last note.

²⁴² Anthony Garcia, *Developing Technique Through Improvisation Drills*. Hons. Thesis, (University of Queensland, 1996)

Up the Fingerboard

Up the Fingerboard (with chord changes)

C Dmi Emi F


3ft. 5ft. 7ft. 8ft.

m i p simile...


(a) (m) (i)

Four Note Arpeggios - *p, i, m, a*

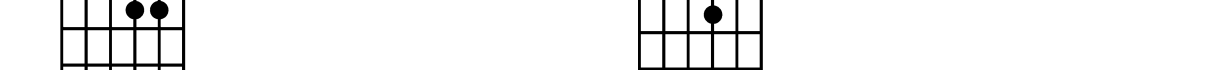
Ami7 B dim7



5ft.



7ft.



a m i p i m simile...

p, i, m, a Across Three Strings with Added Legato

Diagram illustrating the fret positions for the *p, i, m, a* across three strings with added Legato, showing four chord shapes and their corresponding musical notation.

Chord shapes and fret positions:

- C M7**: 3ft.
- CM713**: 3ft.
- B dim7**: 7ft.
- Dmi7**: 5ft.

Musical notation showing the sequence of notes and fingerings for the *p, i, m, a* across three strings with added Legato:

a m i p i m a m i p i m a m i p i m a i m i m

Rhythmic Variants

RV1



RV 2

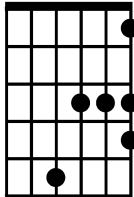


RV 3 (as ornament)

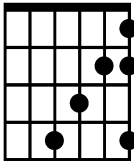



Combined Permutations

Ami7

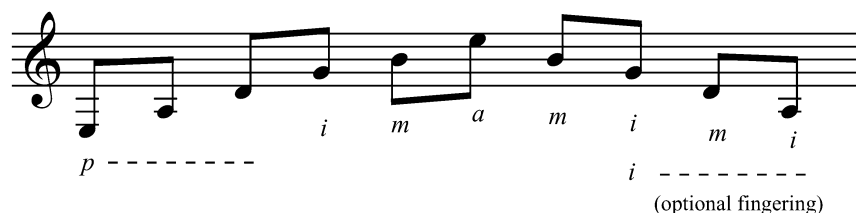


B^bMaj7

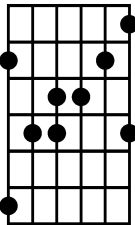
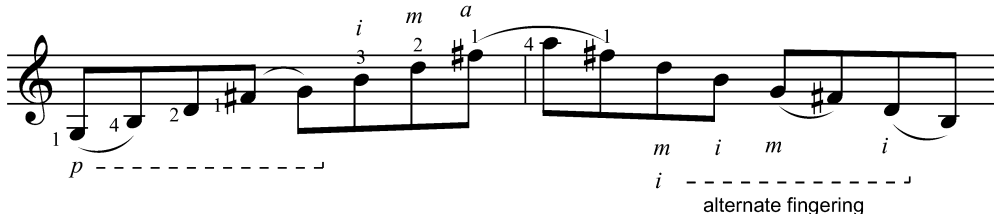
Six String Arpeggios - Fingerstyle Sweeping

Right-hand Sweeping Fingering (open strings)



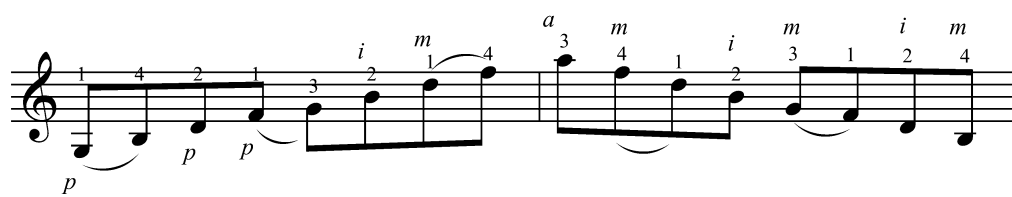
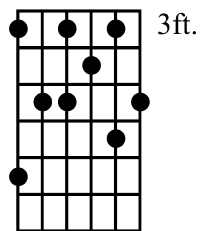
Sweeping Principle Applied to Arpeggios²⁴³

GM79

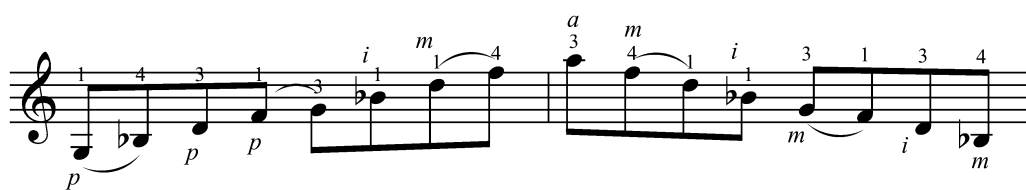
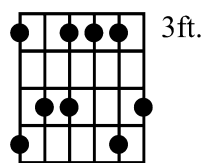



²⁴³ The precedent for this technique originated in the study of *flamenco* guitar *falsetas*. Often the right hand technique employed to articulate melodic variations requires the thumb (*p*) to pluck multiple strings. The technique has been subsequently applied in the development of a range of right hand sweeping patterns.

G79



Gmi79

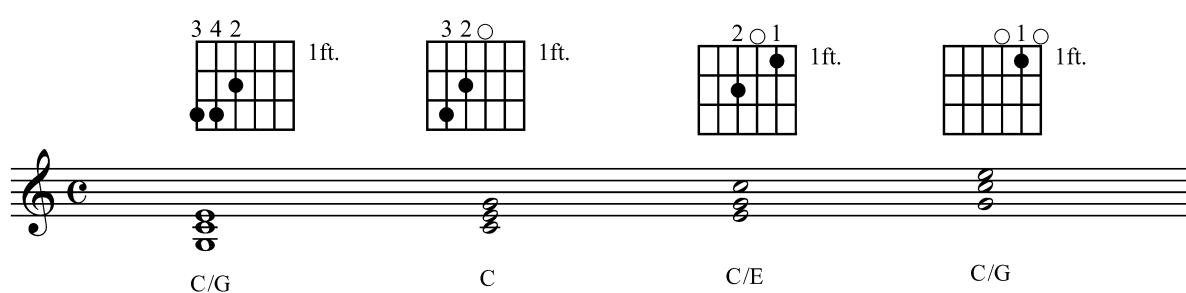


Appendix C: Chord Shapes

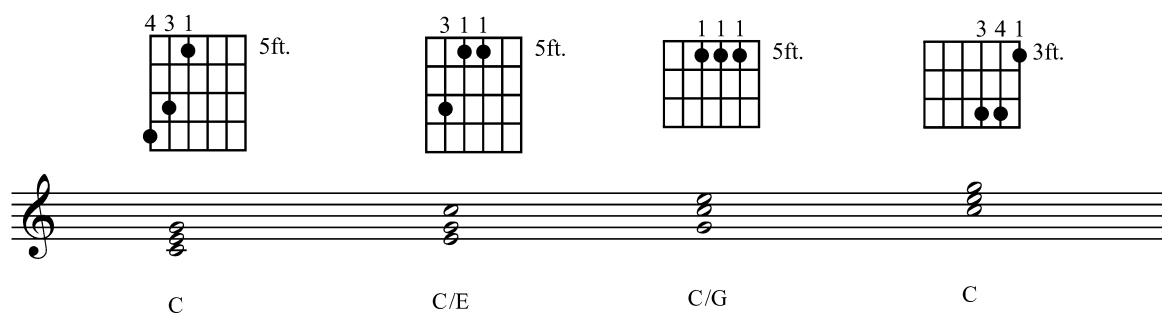
Shape Development Through Systematisation

Closed Shapes

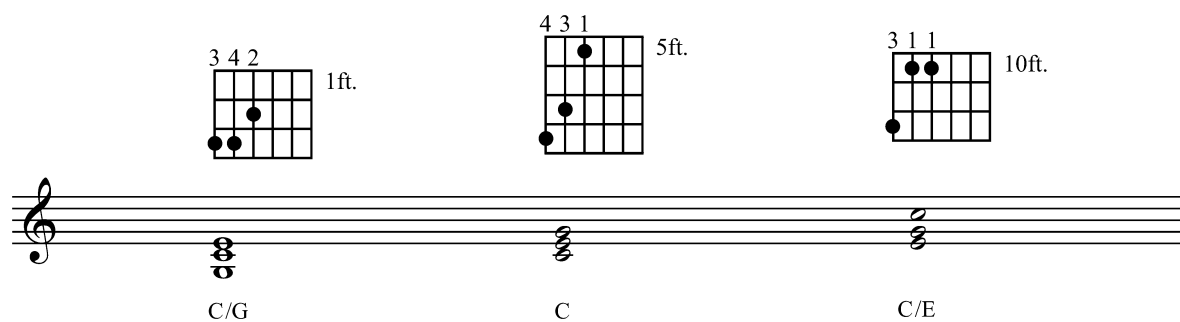
Across the Fingerboard: 1st Position



Across the Fingerboard: 5th – 3rd Position



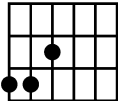
Down the Fingerboard



Open Shapes

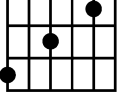
Middle note of a closed triad is transposed by an octave:

3 4 2

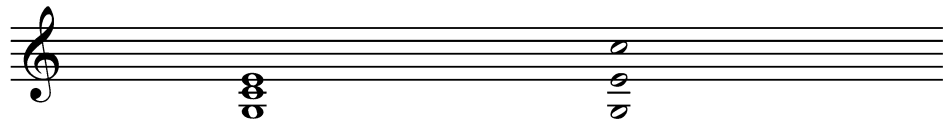


1ft.

3 2 1



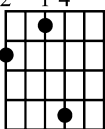
1ft.



C/G

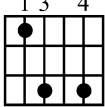
Across the Fingerboard: 3rd Position

2 1 4



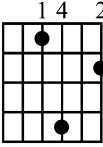
2ft.

1 3 4




3ft.

1 4 2



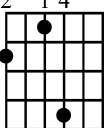
2ft.



C/G C C/E

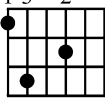
Down the Fingerboard

2 1 4



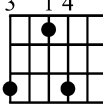
2ft.

1 3 2

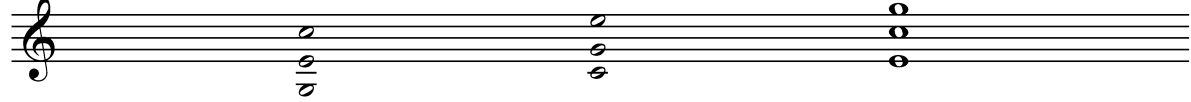


8ft.

3 1 4



10ft.



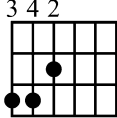
C/G C C/E

Split Shapes

Top note moves up one octave:

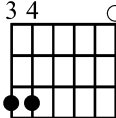
3 4 2

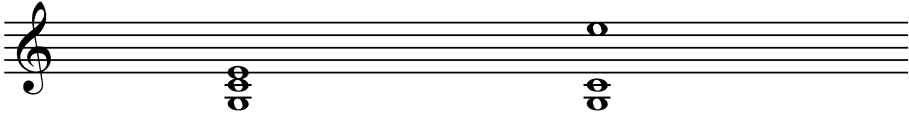
1ft.



3 4

1ft.





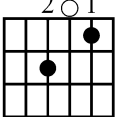
C/G

C/G

Bottom note moves down one octave:

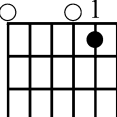
2 1


1ft.



1

1ft.





C/E

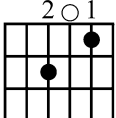
C/E

Four, Five and Six Voice Chords

Double 3rd or 8ve from Closed Triad:

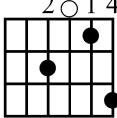
2 1


1ft.



2 1 4

1ft.



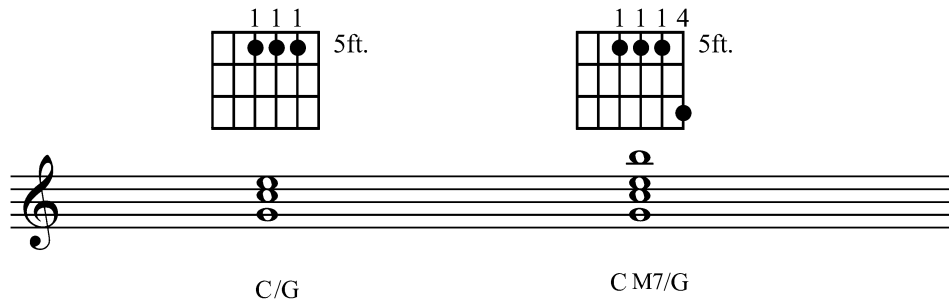


C/E

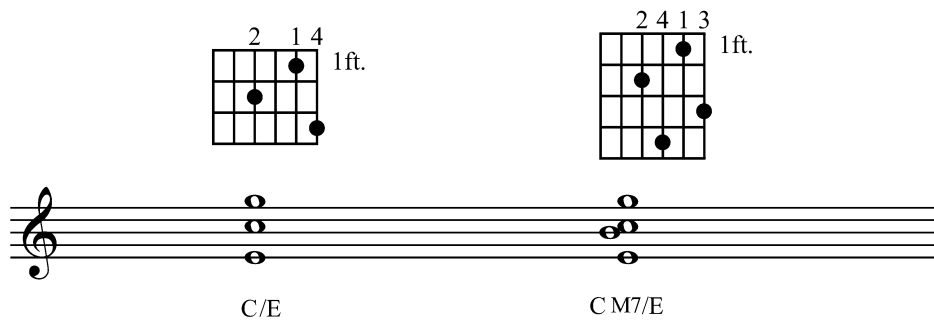
C/E

Adding Nonharmonic Tones

Adding a 7th Note to Closed Triad

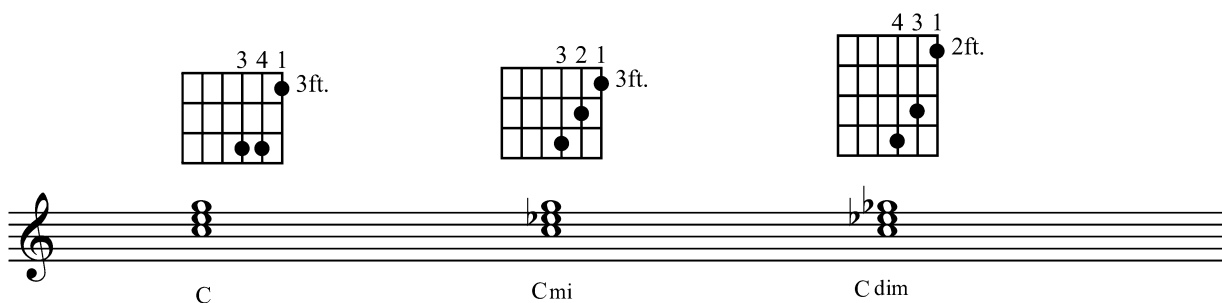


Adding 7th Note to Open Triad

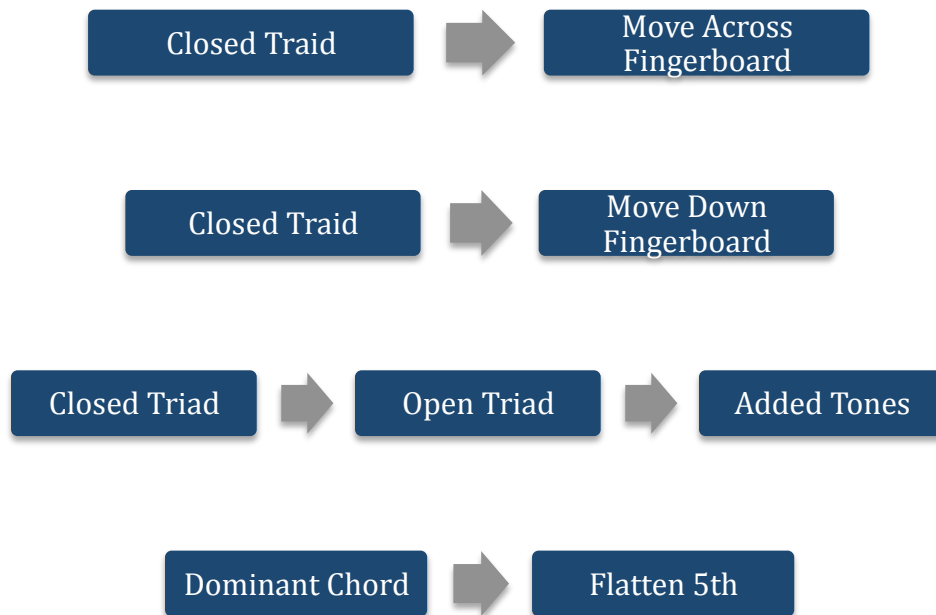


Adjusting the Foundational Shapes

Flatten the 3rd = C minor – Flatten the 5th = C diminished



Possible Adjustment Procedures:



Developing Shapes in Context

Systemization gradually breaks down when harmonies are developed through a specified musical context. A chord sequence, either memorized or outline in a chart, is the simplest and most effective way to integrate and develop one's chordal vocabulary.

The diagram shows a sequence of seven guitar chords, each with a fretboard diagram above it and a musical staff below it. The fretboard diagrams include finger numbers (1-4) and fret numbers (2ft., 3ft.). The musical staff shows the chord voicing in treble clef.

| Chord | Fingering | Fret |
|-------|-----------|------|
| C/G | 2, 1, 4 | 2ft. |
| G/B | 1, 4, 2 | 2ft. |
| C | 1, 3, 4 | 3ft. |
| Emi | 1, 3, 2 | 2ft. |
| Ami/E | 1, 3, 4 | 2ft. |
| G/B | 3, 2, 1 | 2ft. |
| C | 1, 3, 4 | 3ft. |

As I morphed between systemisation and contextualisation I began to observe a discernible increase in my capacity to notice interlocking patterns in the music I was studying. This process also augmented my aural skills as well as my ability to incorporate cognitive creative adjustments in real-time. This kind of fluid adjustment defines the experimentation process as I twisted around the known forms in different ways adding to, and changing shapes, purposefully and by accident.

Developing Shapes through Experimentation

The experimentation process necessarily sees a shift away from systemisation through techniques of development, variation, deconstruction and chance discovery. Experimenting through improvisation, therefore, is essential in developing an original harmonic palette to augment the chordal vocabulary that emerges from a more systematised organisation of harmonies and shapes.

Simple Sequence in Ami (descending)

The diagram illustrates a descending sequence of eight chords, each with a fretboard diagram, a musical staff representation, and a label:

- AmM6**: Fretboard diagram (1st-4th frets), musical staff (A, C, E, G, B, D), label AmM6.
- G79**: Fretboard diagram (1st-3rd frets), musical staff (G, B, D, F, A, C), label G79.
- F79**: Fretboard diagram (1st-4th frets), musical staff (F, A, C, E, G, B), label F79.
- E7#9**: Fretboard diagram (1st-4th frets), musical staff (E, G, B, D, F#, A), label E7#9.
- Ami9**: Fretboard diagram (1st-4th frets), musical staff (A, C, E, G, B, D), label Ami9.
- G#9b9**: Fretboard diagram (1st-4th frets), musical staff (G#, B, D, F, A, C), label G#9b9.
- F7(M7)**: Fretboard diagram (1st-4th frets), musical staff (F, A, C, E, G, B), label F7(M7).
- EM7**: Fretboard diagram (1st-4th frets), musical staff (E, G, B, D, F#, A), label EM7.

Extensions

An infinite array of interesting permutations can emerge through the experimentation process. The first shape a) is a standard chord shape; chord shape b) is an original extension developed by experimenting with added tones. The technical demands of chord b) emerge when the tone required can only be added with a difficult stretch from the original shape a). Chord c) is a much simpler shape (from a technical perspective) which generates an equally interesting, yet distinct, sound. The final chord d), emerged as another, previously studied chord shape from Philip Houghton's composition *Stele*,²⁴⁴ came to mind.

The image displays four guitar chord diagrams, each on a 6-string fretboard grid, with their corresponding musical staves and chord names below them.

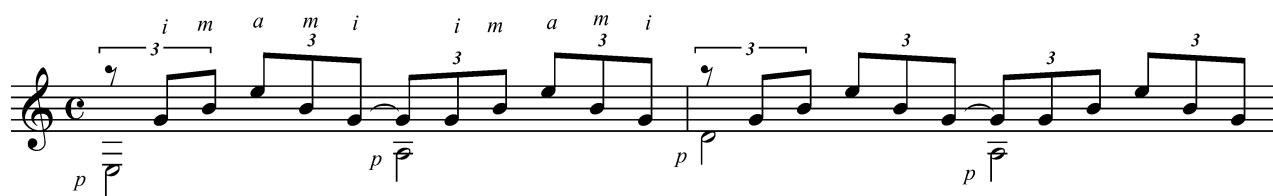
- a)** Diagram shows notes on strings 1, 3, 1, 4 (from top to bottom). Labeled "1ft." and "B^b7¹¹".
- b)** Diagram shows notes on strings 1, 1, 4, 3 (from top to bottom). Labeled "1ft." and "B^b7⁹11".
- c)** Diagram shows notes on strings 1, 3, 4 (from top to bottom). Labeled "1ft." and "B^b6¹¹".
- d)** Diagram shows notes on strings 2, 4, 2, 3 (from top to bottom). Labeled "5ft." and "B^b9[#]11".

Below the diagrams are four musical staves, each with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B^b). The notes on the staves correspond to the chord diagrams above them.

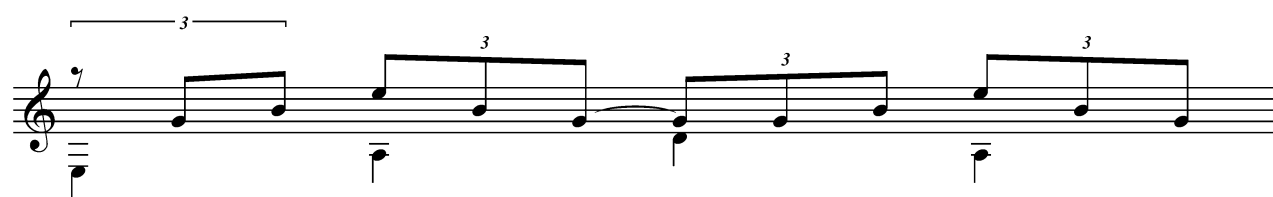
²⁴⁴ Philip Houghton, *Stele*. (Sydney: Moonstone Music Publications, 1989)

Appendix D: Rhythms, Accompaniment Patterns and Ornamental Arpeggios

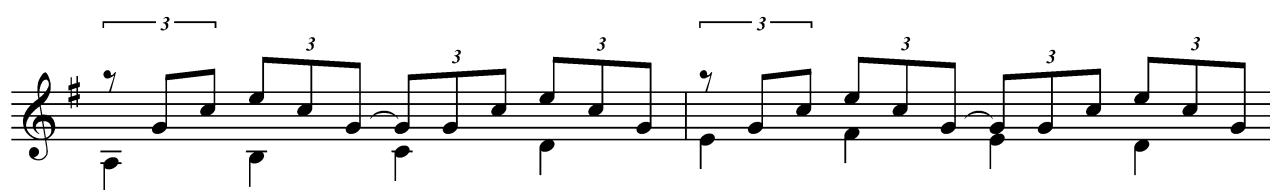
Standard Classical Guitar Arpeggio Pattern I (open strings)



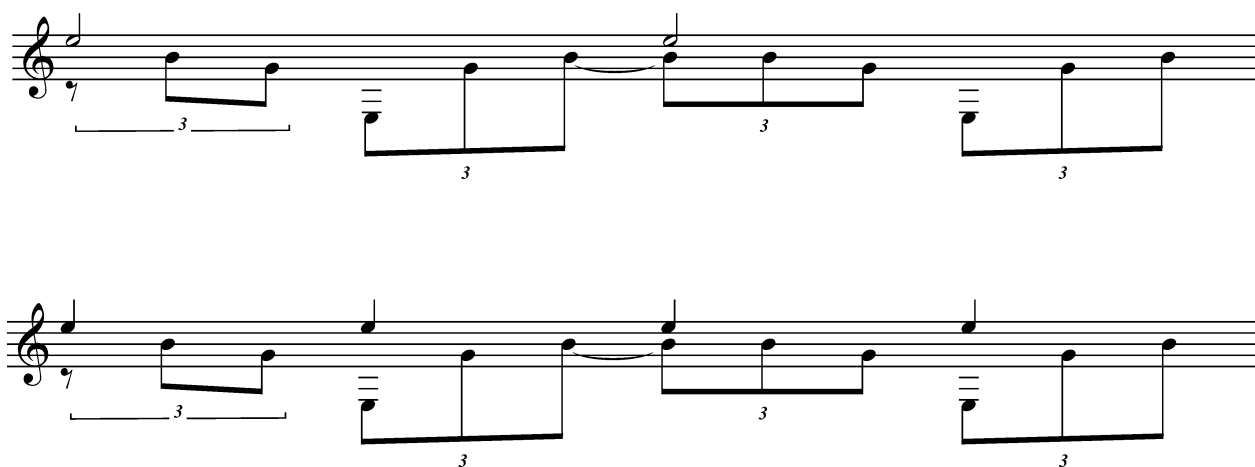
Bass movement



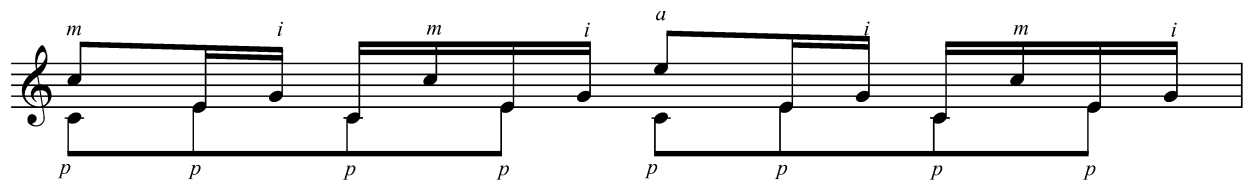
Applied Chord Shape



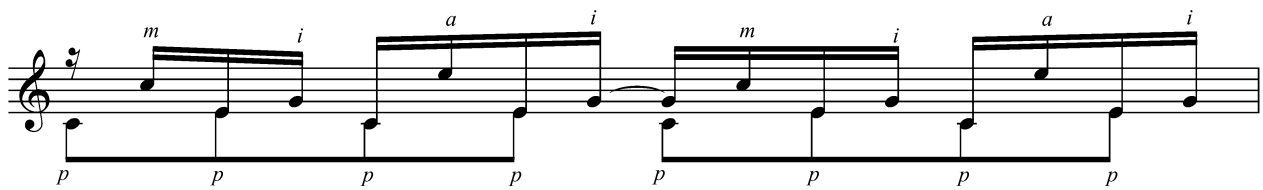
Shifting Attention to Treble Voice



Bluegrass (claw-hammer) I²⁴⁵

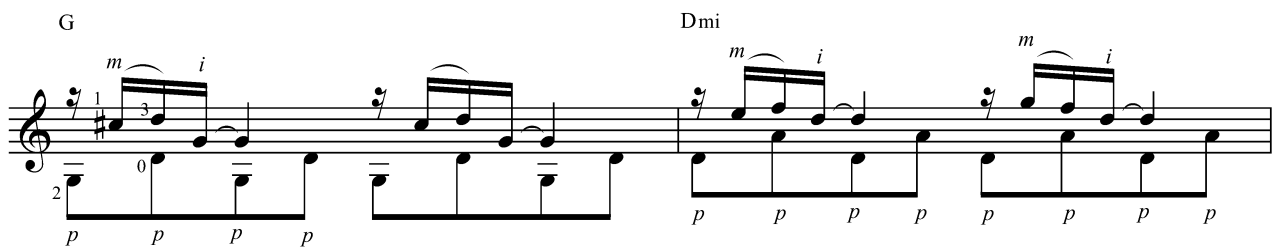


Bluegrass (claw-hammer) II



Compositional Applications

*The Lone Guaracho*²⁴⁶



*Paisajes Atlanticos*²⁴⁷ (over the *Bulerias* compass)

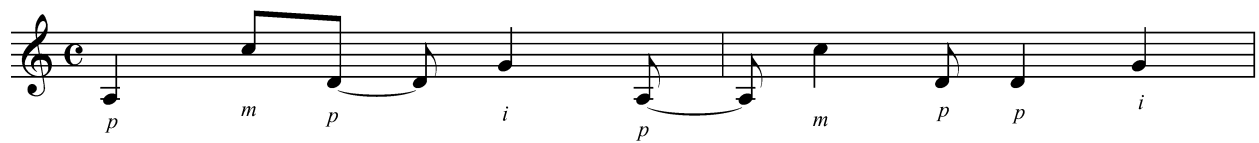


²⁴⁵ Brett Duncan, *Fingerpicking Guitar Licks*. (SA: Koala Publications, 1990), 9.

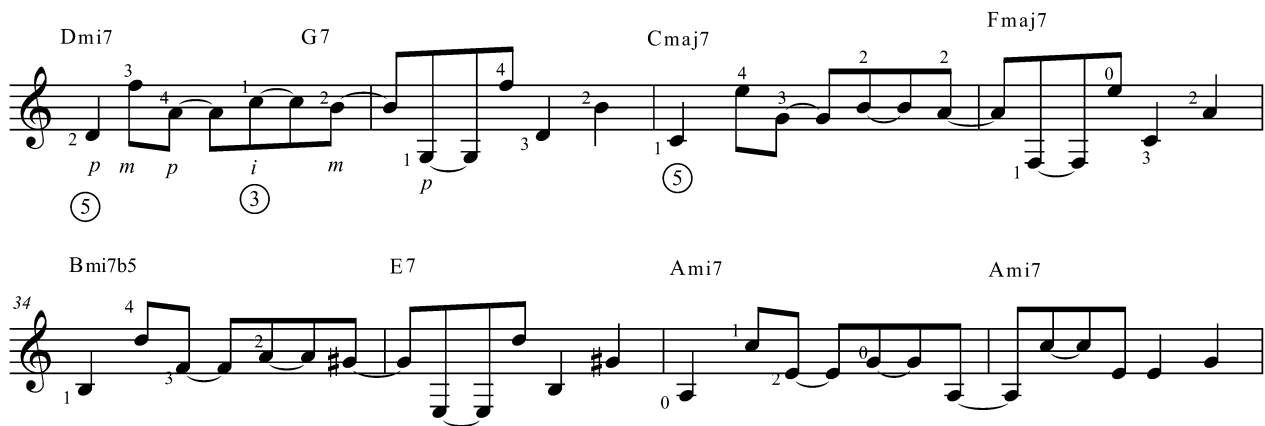
²⁴⁶ Anthony Garcia, *The Lone Guaracho*. 2014.

²⁴⁷ Anthony Garcia, *Paisajes Atlanticos*. 2014.

Montuno Cubano²⁴⁸ I (claw-hammer spliced)



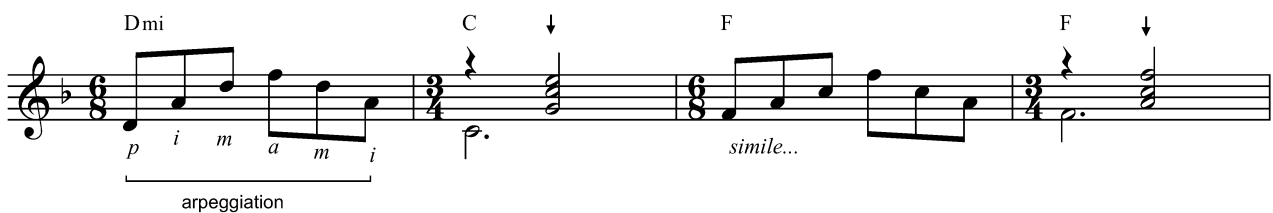
Montuno²⁴⁹ (sequence vamp)



Españoletas Strumming Pattern



Interpolating Arpeggios



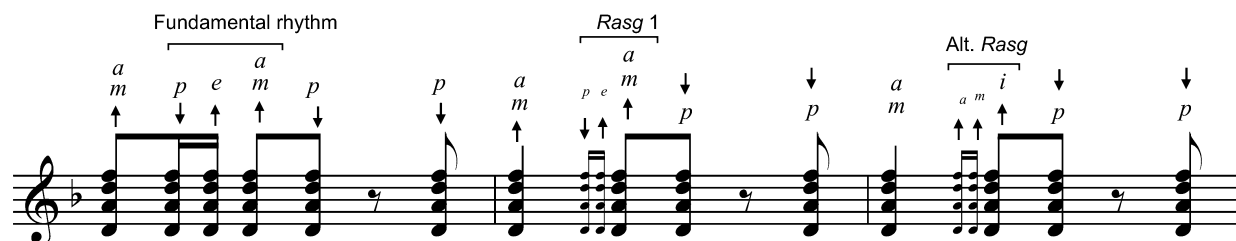
²⁴⁸ Jeff Peretz, "Cuba: Your passport to a new world of music - Guitar Atlas Series – Guitar Styles from Around the Globe. (Van Nuys: Alfred, ND), 20.

²⁴⁹ JMBLECK, "Cuban Guitar Rhythm," YouTube.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BywNxuHs_e8&feature=channel. (accessed, September 14, 2011).



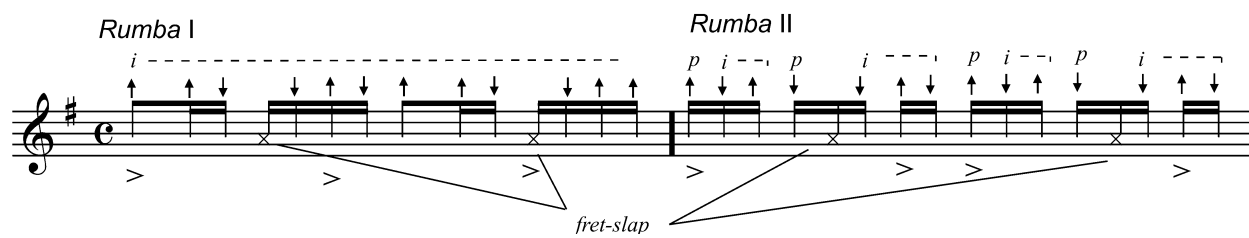
Ornamental Strums



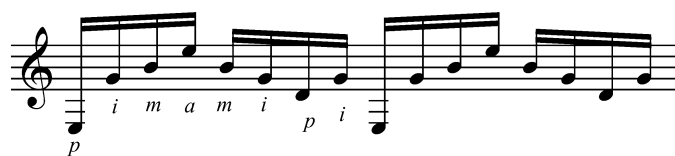
Response to Murcia



Rumba



Rumba Arpeggio



Rumba Arpeggio: Applied Bassline I

④

Bassline II

p i m simile...

70

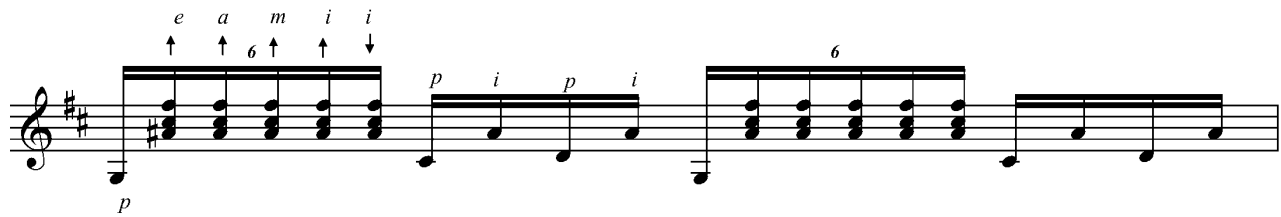
Rumba Arpeggio III (treble-voice application)

CV

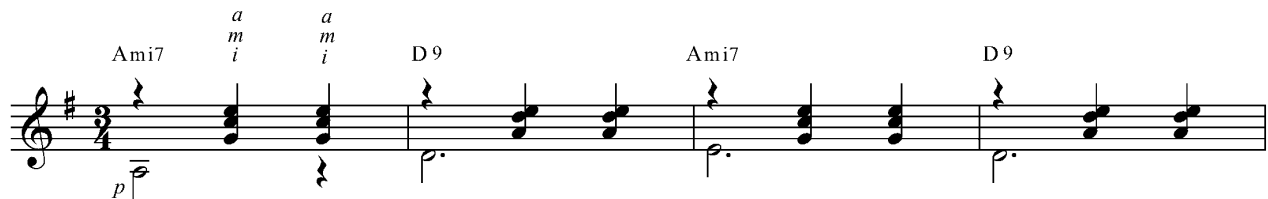
Juxtaposing Arpeggios and Rasgueados

I

II



Waltz I



Celtic Reggae Vamp



Applied arpeggio:



Celtino Variation I (*Rondo Celtino*²⁵⁰)



²⁵⁰ Anthony Garcia, *Rondo Celtino*. 2014. [CD3 – Track: 8]

Ornamental Arpeggiation (based on common chord shapes)

I

Emi

*Baroque guitar sign :/:

II

F \sharp /C \sharp

III

G⁹

IV

C M7

V

B \flat 9(\sharp 11)

Ornamental Arpeggiation (abstract inventions)

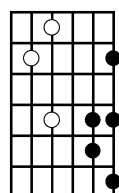
ornamental cel

The image displays three musical staves, each illustrating a different ornamental arpeggiation technique. Each staff begins with a boxed-in section labeled 'ornamental cel' (ornamental cell), which serves as a template for the subsequent musical phrases.

- Staff 1:** The first staff shows a sequence of arpeggiated chords. The first measure is boxed and contains a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a dynamic marking of *p* (piano). The notes are G4, A4, B4, and C5. Above the first measure, a circled '1' is connected by a bracket to the notes. Below the first measure, a circled '3' is connected by a bracket to the notes. The subsequent measures show the same arpeggiated pattern repeated.
- Staff 2:** The second staff shows a sequence of arpeggiated chords. The first measure is boxed and contains a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a dynamic marking of *p* (piano). The notes are G4, A4, B4, and C5. Above the first measure, a circled '3' is connected by a bracket to the notes. Below the first measure, a circled '5' is connected by a bracket to the notes. The subsequent measures show the same arpeggiated pattern repeated.
- Staff 3:** The third staff shows a sequence of arpeggiated chords. The first measure is boxed and contains a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a dynamic marking of *p* (piano). The notes are G4, A4, B4, and C5. Above the first measure, a circled '1' is connected by a bracket to the notes. Below the first measure, a circled '3' is connected by a bracket to the notes. The subsequent measures show the same arpeggiated pattern repeated.

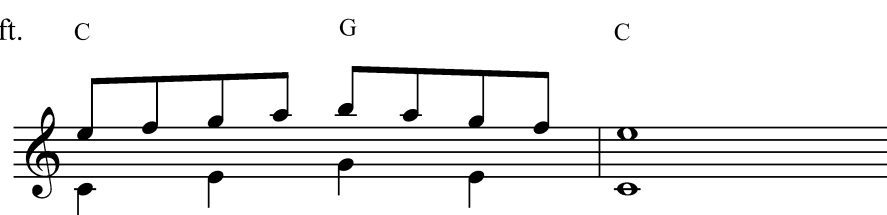
Appendix E: Contrapuntal Shapes

C major 3rd Position



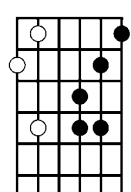
2ft.

C G C



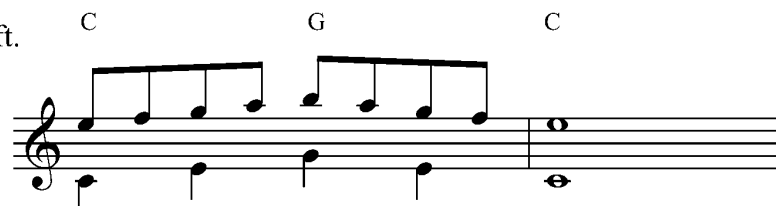
Musical notation for C major 3rd position. The scale is shown in treble clef, starting on C4 (open string) and ascending to C5 (first fret), then descending back to C4. The notes are C, D, E, F, G, A, B, C, B, A, G, F, E, D, C.

C major 7th Position



7ft.

C G C



Musical notation for C major 7th position. The scale is shown in treble clef, starting on C4 (open string) and ascending to C5 (seventh fret), then descending back to C4. The notes are C, D, E, F, G, A, B, C, B, A, G, F, E, D, C.

C minor 3rd Position



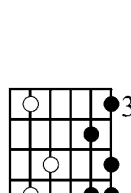
3ft.

Cmi G Cmi




Musical notation for C minor 3rd position. The scale is shown in treble clef, starting on C4 (open string) and ascending to C5 (third fret), then descending back to C4. The notes are C, D, E, F, G, A, B, C, B, A, G, F, E, D, C.

C minor (dorian) 3rd Position



3ft.

Cmi

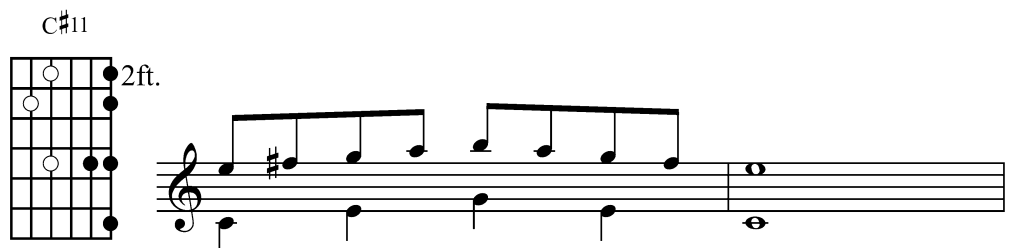


Musical notation for C minor (dorian) 3rd position. The scale is shown in treble clef, starting on C4 (open string) and ascending to C5 (third fret), then descending back to C4. The notes are C, D, E, F, G, A, B, C, B, A, G, F, E, D, C.

C Lydian 3rd Position

C#11

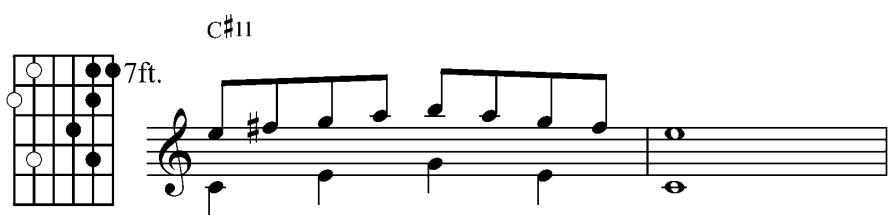
2ft.



C Lydian 7th Position

C#11

7ft.



C7 3rd Position

C7

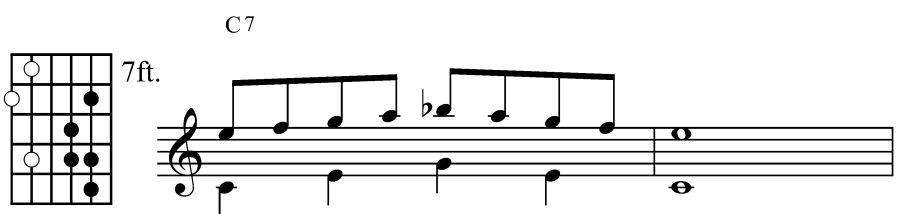
2ft.



C7 7th Position

C7

7ft.



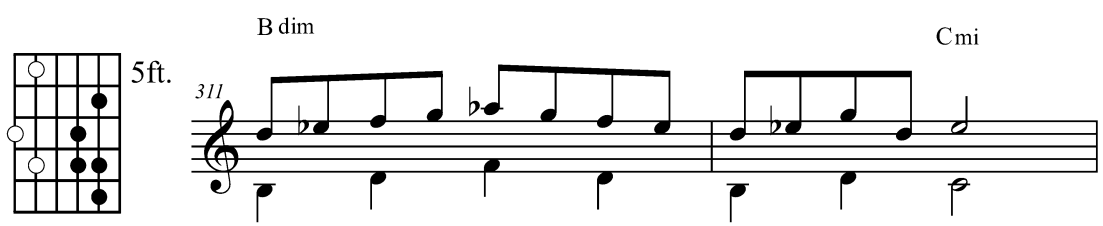
B diminished 5th Position

B dim

Cmi

5ft.

3//



Appendix F: Extended Techniques

***Ud*-style picking (standard and muted) [DVD4 – Track 1]**

Procedure:

Step 1 – press thumb (*p*) of RH against right-hand index finger (*i*) behind first joint as if holding a pick.

Step 2 – strike stings in aggressive fashion imitating *Ud*-style picking.

Step 3 – muting the strings with the palm of the right hand repeated the procedure to create a dampened muting version of the effect.

Sax-popping (LH tapping with RH palm muting) [DVD4 – Track 2]

Procedure:

Step 1 – dampen all six strings with right side of RH palm near bridge.

Step 2 – hit selected notes on the fingerboard with strong LH hammer technique to produce a sound akin to a percussive saxophone popping sound.²⁵¹

One-String *Rasgueado* Tremolo and Ornament [DVD4 – Track: 3]

Procedure:

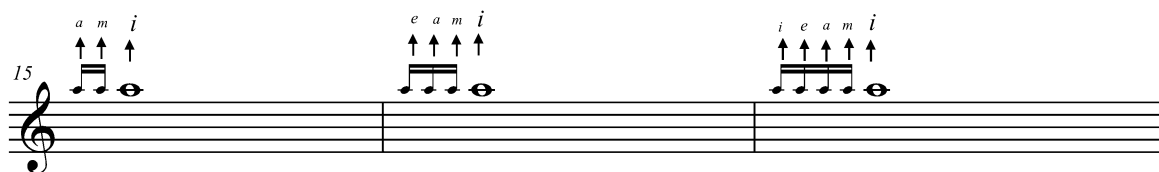
Step 1 - Dampen second string with right-hand thumb (*p*) to ensure *rasgueados* only strike the first string.

Step 2 – Strike first string with back of nail using conventional the application of *rasgueado* patterns.

Step 3 – Augment the procedure to create a *rasgueado* tremolo effect. A shorter application of the technique creates an ornamental effect.

²⁵¹ This technique emerged after watching an experimental saxophonist slap the keys while simultaneously blowing to create an unusual percussive effect. Subsequent experiments by the author resulted in an estimated imitation of the effect.

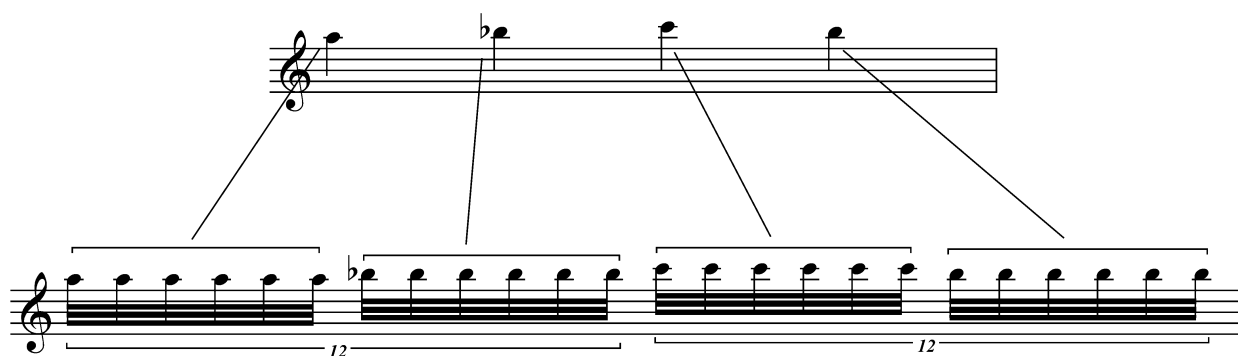
Rasgueado Ornament



Rasgueado Tremolo



Applied to Melody

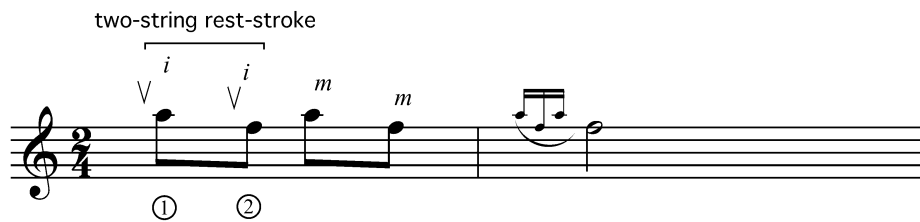


Rasgueado Tremolo/Ornamentation

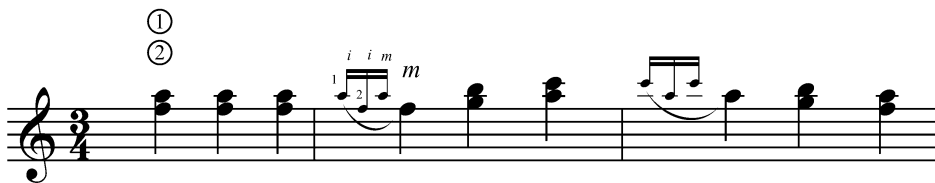
1. Six-stroke *rasgueado*-tremolo [version 1]
2. Six-stroke *rasgueado*-tremolo [version 2]
3. Five-stroke *rasgueado*-tremolo
4. Three and four-stroke *rasgueado*-ornament

Mexican *Requinto* Ornament [DVD4 – Track: 4]

Procedure



Application



Kora-style Ornamentation [DVD4 – Track: 5]

Step 1 – place LH fingers on fingerboard to form any possible interval on adjacent strings.

Step 2 – roll RH *i* finger across both notes (like a two-string rest stroke) followed by the *m* finger across the same notes in the same fashion.

Step 3 – apply the action to the following fingers creating a consistent rhythmic loop: *i, m, a, m, i, m, a, m, i etc...*

Step 4 – repeat the action at speed to create a cross-string ornamental effect.

Step 5 - a *kora*-like ornamental effect is achieved by applying the procedure to pentatonic scale shape movement across the fingerboard.

Gamelan Effect [DVD4 - Track: 5]

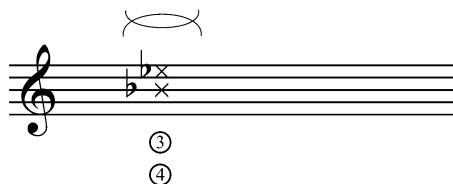
Process

Step 1: RH adjacent string twist - twist lowest string under upper adjacent string with *p*, pull upper string over lower string with *i* – strings will be crossed

Step 2: Hold twisted string down with one finger from LH, release RH grip

Step 3: Pluck one or both of the crossed strings with RH finger(s)

Notation:



Water Effect [DVD4 – Track: 6]

Procedure:

Step 1 - Press left-hand fingernails onto strings near sound-hole. [*i* on 3rd string, *m* finger on 3rd string, *a* finger on 1st string]

Step 2 - Right-hand plucks strings while left-hand fingers depress strings sliding freely, imitating the sounds of water droplets falling into a well.

Appendix G: A Guide to the Folio

Documented Recitals Featuring Improvised Music for Solo Guitar

1. University of Queensland, Nixon Room – October 11, 2012 (full improvisation recital)
2. University of Tasmania, Conservatorium Recital Hall - March 11, 2013 (full improvisation recital)
3. Western Australia Academy of the Performing Arts (WAAPA) – August 23, 2013 (original compositions and improvisations)
4. Maleny, Maleny Community Hall - December, 1, 2013 (original compositions, improvisations and repertoire by other composers)
5. Brisbane, Soul Space - June 7, 2014 (full improvisation recital)

Programmed Improvisations 2012-2014

| UQ 2012 October 11 | UTAS 2013 March 11 | WAAPA 2013 July | Maleny 2013 December | Brisbane 2014 June 7 |
|--|---|--------------------------------------|--|---|
| Sounds Across Oceans | Prelude and Presto on Brouwer Study No. 5 | Sonica (Afro Trance Suite) | Sancho-Leyenda | Sonica Suite |
| Sonica (Afro Trance Suite) | Guajira/Montuno | Sounds Across Oceans | Rondo Celtino | Theme and Pulsations on the Song of the Chanter |
| Solea Barroca | Sonica (Afro Trance Suite) | Responsorial | Improvisation on Jesus Joy of Man's Desiring (J.S. Bach) | Solea Barroca |
| The Arc (banjo) | Fredrick's Window (Prelude and Passacaglia) | Western Mind Lapse (electric guitar) | Celtic Sea (Suite) | Rondo Celtino |
| Celtic Sea (fantasy) | Mariachi Rhythm Study No. 1 | | Thai Fantasy (Thai <i>Phin</i>) | Shi Beg Shi Mhor |
| Responsorial (looped classical guitar) | Shi Beg Shi Mohr | | Western Mind-Lapse (electric guitar) | Sounds Across Oceans |
| | Solea Barroca | | | The Celtic Sea |
| | Paisajes Atlanticos | | | |

RECORDINGS

CD 1 Musical Examples (for track listing see p. xii)

CD 2 University of Queensland Recital (2012)

CD 3 Maleny Recital (2013)

DVD 1 University of Tasmania Recital (2013)

DVD 2 Western Australian Academy of the Performing Arts Recital (2013)

DVD 3 Soul Space Recital (2014)

DVD 4 Extended Technique Demonstration Video

DVD 5 Final PhD Exam Recital (University of Tasmania – September 27, 2014)

CD 2 University of Queensland Recital

Track 1: *Sounds Across Oceans*

Track 2: *Sonica* (fantasy)

Track 3: *Solea Barroca*

Track 4: *The Arc* (banjo)

Track 5: *Celtic Sea* (fantasy)

Track 6: *Responsorial* (live looping of classical guitar with processed digital delay)

CD 3 Maleny Recital

Track 1: *Fantasia No. 7* - John Dowland (1563 – 1626)

Track 2: *Rondo Celtino* (improvisation)

Track 3: *Sancho Leyenda* (improvisation)

Track 4: *A Love Sonata – 1st Movt. 'Love's Truth'* - A. Garcia (2007)

Track 5: *Improvisation on Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring by J.S. Bach* (1685-1750)

Track 6: *Cordoba* - Isaac Albeniz (1860 – 1909)

Track 7: *The Celtic Sea - Suite* (improvisation)

Track 8: *Stringsift* A. Garcia (2013)²⁵²

Track 9: *Cadiz* – Isaac Albeniz (1860 – 1909)

DVD 1 University of Tasmania Recital (improvisations by A. Garcia)

Track 1: *Prelude and Presto on Study No. 5 by Leo Brouwer*

Track 2: *Guajira/Montuno*

Track 3: *Sonica – Afro-Trance Suite (Prelude, Sonica Theme, 7/8 Vamp, Percussion Section, Sonica Theme)*

Track 4: *Fredrick's Window (Prelude and Passacaglia)*

Track 5: *Mariachi Rhythm Study No. 1*

Track 6: *Prelude, Theme and Variations and Cadenza on O'Carolan's Shi Beg Shi Mhor*

Track 7: *Solea Barroca*

Track 8: *Paisajes Atlanticos*

DVD 2 Western Australia Academy of the Performing Arts Recital

Track 1: *La Folia* – A. Garcia (2004)

Track 2: *Sonica – Afro-Trance Suite* A. Garcia (improvisation)

Track 3: *Malili Dreaming* – A. Garcia (2004)

Track 4: *Sounds Across Oceans* A. Garcia (improvisation)

Track 5: *Responsorial* A. Garcia (improvisation)

Track 6: *Western Mindlapse* A. Garcia (2013) [live processed electric guitar looping]

²⁵² This has been faded out early as the piece was cut short due to a technical failure with the recording equipment.

DVD 3 Soul Space Recital

Track 1: *Sonica – Afro-Trance Fantasy*

Track 2: *Theme and Pulsations on the Song of the Chanter*

Track 3: *Solea Barroca*

Track 4: *Rondo Celtino*

Track 5: *Prelude, Theme and Variations and Cadenza on O'Carolan's Shi Beg Shi Mhor*

Track 6: *Sounds Across Oceans*

Track 7: *The Celtic Sea – Fantasy*

DVD 4 Extended Technique Demonstration

Track 1: *Ud*-style plucking and muted plucking

Track 2: Sax-popping technique

Track 3: *Kora*-style ornamentation

Track 4: *Rasgueado* tremolo and ornamentation

Track 5: *Gamelan* effect

Track 6: Water effect

DVD 5 Final Exam Recital, University of Tasmania (2014)

Track 1: *Theme and Pulsations of the Song of the Chanter*

Track 2: *Solea Barroca*

Track 3: *Amorphous Variations on Bianco Fiore*

Track 4: *Sounds Across Oceans*

Track 5: *Sonica – Afro-Trance Fantasy*

Track 6: *Paisajes Atlanticos*

Track 7: *Prelude, Theme and Variations and Cadenza on O'Carolan's Shi Beg Shi Mhor*

Track 8: *Blue Oceans in C*

Appendix H: Biography and Ancillary Projects 2011-2014

From the experimental music scene in New York to performing early music with the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra acclaimed guitarist/composer Anthony Garcia is a unique voice in the world guitar scene. Performing throughout Australia, China, Thailand, Japan, Mexico and the United States both as a soloist and in collaboration with creative artists across range of fields Garcia's ever-evolving musical landscape embraces diverse cultural connections and contemporary experimentation. Fusing the ancient with the contemporary, Latin folk with exploratory improvisations, pulsating world rhythms and Asiatic soundscapes, Garcia's music, firmly grounded in the historical traditions of the guitar, continues to take audiences through uncharted waters. Landmark solo recordings *Skyflyer* (2004) and *Malili Dreaming* (2007) were followed by award winning collaborations with Sandra Real (*Zarabanda – Latin Harp and Guitar Duo*, 2008) and didgeridoo master William Barton (*Desert Stars Dancing*, 2010).

After completing a Masters degree in classical guitar performance at the University of Queensland in 1999, under the guidance of renowned teacher Isolde Schaupp, Garcia relocated to Merida, Mexico, working as an artist/teacher at the Universidad Autonoma de Yucatan between 2000-2003. During his time in Merida Garcia established an annual guitar festival, a University guitar orchestra and a monthly recital series. Upon his return to Australia Garcia embarked on a new creative phase focusing on performance and composition. Since 2004 Garcia has composed and recorded an eclectic range of music across styles and genres. Accompanying a large body of work for solo guitar are compositions for guitar ensemble, guitar and strings, chamber works, experimental digital and electronic compositions, film scores as well music for guitar and numerous ethnic instruments including the *shakuhachi*, didgeridoo and Latin harp.

Seminal compositions include *Songs from the Divine Wilderness* (Suite for guitar and violin) premiered at the Adelaide International Guitar Festival in 2010, *Ulysses Blue for Guitar Orchestra and Didgeridoo*, premiered by the Townsville Guitar Orchestra and William Barton in 2009, *City Scapes for Soprano Saxophone, Guitar, Cello and Piano*, performed for the Queensland Ballet series *Soiree Classique* in 2009 and *Three Sketches for Guitar and Shakuhachi* performed with Riley Lee in 2008. Ongoing research into improvisation, composition and performance practice continues to shape the educational philosophy underpinning Garcia's lectures, workshops and master classes.

Ancillary Recitals, Presentations and Projects 2011-2014

The BG Sound Project: William Barton (didgeridoo) and Anthony Garcia (guitar)

- Murwillumbah Regional Art Gallery - March 27, 2011
- Tyalgum Community Hall - May 21, 2011
- Noosa Long Weekend Festival, Noosa - June 22, 2012
- Music By The Sea – Sandgate Hall – May 4, 2013
- The Sydney Opera House, Utzon Room - May 17, 2013
- Tyalgum Festival – September 6, 2013

Anthony Garcia (guitar) and David Williams (didgeridoo and traditional dance)

- Oz Trade Festival Performance and Workshops, Bangkok, Thailand - July 17-23, 2012

Anthony Garcia and Hucky Eichelman Duo - Thailand Tour 2011

- Korat - Suranaree Technology University, Wittayapat Room - 15 August,
- Mahasarakham - Mahasarakham University – 16 August
- Khon Kaen - Khon Kaen University, Grichawat Lowacharin Main Auditorium – 18 August
- Chiang Mai – Monfort, St. Joseph Hall – August 20
- Chiang Rai – Mae Fay Luang University, Wanasawan Room – August 22
- Pai – Montis Resort, Conference Room, August 23
- Bangkok – TCC Hall, August 26
- Phattalung – Thaksin University Phattalung, August 30
- Phuket – Rajabhat University, Rajabhat University Theater, September 3

Soulo Guitar Quartet - Andrew Vivers (*flamenco*), Toby Wren (*jazz*), Aaron Hopper (*contemporary folk*) and Anthony Garcia (*classical*)

- Judith Wright Centre, Brisbane - July 8, 2012
- The Woombye Pub, Woombye – November 8, 2012

Beijing Recitals 2013

- Beijing Art Gallery – May 27, 2013
- Peking University – May 29, 2013
- Music Theater of Xiaoke – May 31, 2013
- The Clubhouse of Chateau Regalia – June 2, 2013

Breathing Under Water (short film)

- Music by the author, film written and produced by Jennifer Garcia

Forums and Presentations

- Postgraduate Forum - Stairway to Heaven: New horizons for the classical guitar - University of Tasmania - July 29, 2011
- Didactic Recital - Queensland Conservatorium of Music – Ian Hanger Recital Hall, August 21, 2012
- Maria de Buenos Aires (Opera by Astor Piazzola) (principle guitar) Brisbane Festival - September 14-17, 2011
- Mullum Festival – Solo concert – Mullumbimbi, 26 November, 2011
- Soniclines (art-pop trio) Brisbane Powerhouse (3 March, 2012)
- UQ Recital (classical repertoire) – (March 22, 2012)
- Ulysses Blue for Guitar Orchestra - conducting the Townsville Guitar Orchestra, Townsville Entertainment Center - April 8, 2012
- Energex Presentation - Creative Thinking and Music, Energex Building Brisbane - June 4, 2012
- Composition Lecture, University of Tasmania, Conservatorium of Music – July 2, 2012
- Postgraduate Forum – Narrative and Timeliness, University of Tasmania, Conservatorium of Music - July 3, 2012
- Postgraduate Forum - Four Contrasting Works - March 8, 2013
- Sounds Across Oceans Thailand: fostering relationships of discovery in music education – Khon Kaen University, Khon Kaen, Thailand - 20 June – 6 July
- Postgraduate Forum, Stringsift – Solo Guitar Improvisation: process, method and practice, University of Tasmania, Conservatorium of Music - April 3, 2014
- ITAC2 – Conference Presenter - International Teaching/Artist Conference, Brisbane - July 1–3, 2014

Appendix I: Selected Scores

The selected scores included in this appendix contain materials in the form of frameworks, variations and improvisational procedures and strategies that were employed in the preparation and execution of improvised music for solo guitar. These scores are not compositions in the traditional sense, rather, they offer additional insight into role scored materials played in my overall methodology. From this perspective they can be viewed as aspects of a much broader method that includes a personal aural vocabulary of ideas that merge and interact with scored and memorized materials in the moment of performance.

Solea Barroca

Prelude, Theme and Cadenza on Shi Beg Shi Mhor

Sonica – Afro-Trance Suite

Rondo Celtino

Mexican Marichi Rhythm Study No. 1.

Solea Barroca

Anthony Garcia (2014)

Improvisation Frameworks

Including Referent Materials, Variations and Improvisational Strategies and Devices

Solea Barroca (A.Garcia 2014)

Improvised Fantasia on the Soleares

Llamada

♩ = 114

E

F M7(#11)

a m *a m* *a m* *a m* *a m* *a m* *e a m i i*

Ligadura

5

Compas Sequence

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Baroque Sequences

Melodic Referents

1. F G Ami Ami F G E

25 F G Ami Ami F G E

33 Gmi F Gmi D Gmi F Gmi

Ami Bmi E Ami Bmi E Ami Bmi E Ami Bmi E

3. ⁴¹

Rasgueado Patterns

1. *a m* *a m* *a m*

2. *i i i i i i*

3. *i a i i a i i a i*

4. *a m p e a m p e a m p e*

5. *a m i i a m i i a m i i*

6. *e a m i i e a m i i e a m i i*

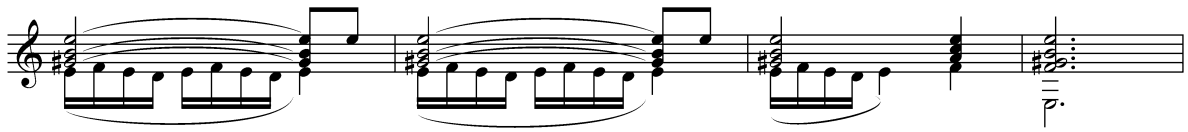
Permutations

Rasgueadods: generating ornamental strumming patterns

61 *a m i* *p e a m* *a m i i* *e a m i i*

Falseta Development

Ligadura Permutations and Related Ornamental Techniques



Transpose *ligadura* to generate melodic variation

69

73

rest stroke

back of nail

Ami9

E

6

Scalic falsetas

81

F(spanish)

E

Two-Bar Cel

F

E

II

I

Permutations

85

E

E

3

3

3

3

89

VIII

V

II

I

93

97

The image shows a musical score for a piece titled "The Rose Tree". The score is written on three staves, each with a treble clef. The first staff begins at measure 89 and ends with a double bar line. The second staff begins at measure 93 and ends with a double bar line. The third staff begins at measure 97 and ends with a double bar line. The music is in 3/4 time, as indicated by the 3/4 time signature at the beginning of the first staff. The key signature has one sharp (F#), indicating the key of D major or F# minor. The melody is written in a simple, folk-like style. There are several chords indicated by Roman numerals: VIII, V, II, and I. The first staff has a "p." (piano) marking under the first measure. The second staff has a "p." marking under the first measure. The third staff has a "p." marking under the first measure. The score is for a single melodic line, likely for a voice or a single instrument.

Arpeggiated *falsetas*

[illegible]

Basic Arpeggio

107

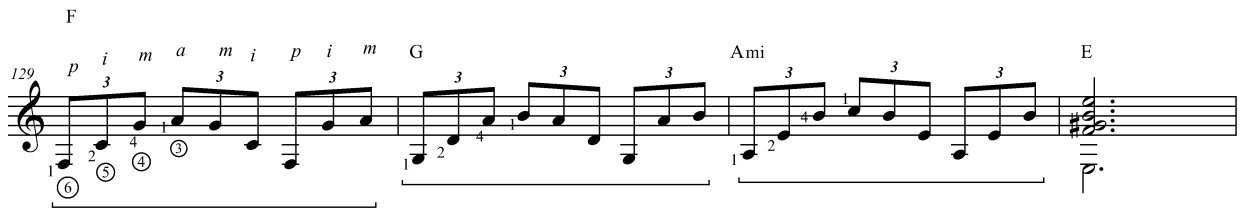
p *p* *i* *m* *a* *m*

111

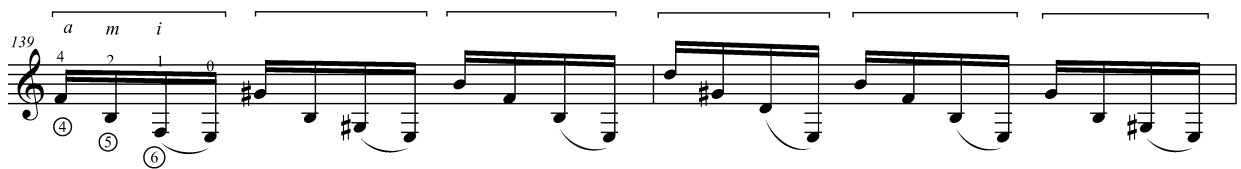
120

④ ②①

p



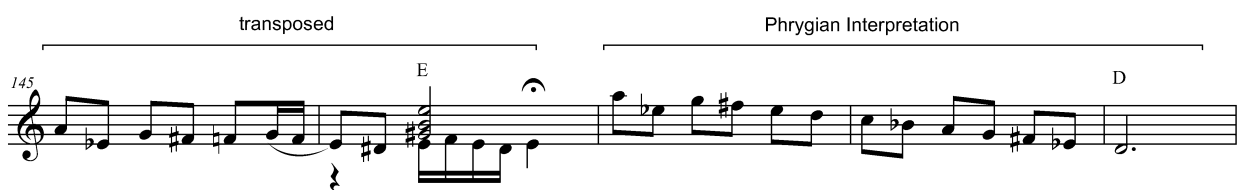
Technical cel shift - transposed over E drone



Shifted across fingerboard then down



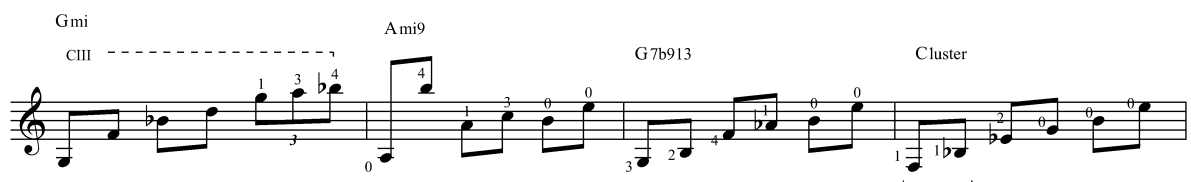
Contemporary, Chromatic and Non-Tonal Elements



F7♭5 (C melodic minor)



F7♭5 (C melodic minor)



348 Fmi(M7)

352 E

357

363 F C F E

P1

371

P2

375

P3

379

Interpolating *rasgueados* between thematic material

384

rasgueado

F P1 E

F C F E

Ami Dmi Ami E/G# Ami E E7/D Ami C G/B C G/D C/E E Ami

411 Gmi6 F Gmi D

415

F G E7sus4 E7(add4)

421

The musical score consists of seven staves of music. The first staff (measures 384-393) features a melodic line with a *rasgueado* technique indicated by a bracket. The second staff (measures 394-403) shows a series of chords with slurs and accents. The third staff (measures 404-413) continues the chordal progression. The fourth staff (measures 414-420) includes a Gmi6 chord and a D chord. The fifth staff (measures 421-426) features a triplet and a 3-measure rest. The sixth staff (measures 427-432) includes a 5-measure rest and a 4-measure rest. The seventh staff (measures 433-438) shows a 5-measure rest and a 4-measure rest.

*Prelude, Theme and Variations, Cadenza on
O'Carolan's Shi Beg Shi Mhor*

Anthony Garcia (2014)

Additional Variations, Strategies and Devices

Variation and Permutations of Original Referent Material

Prelude

Opening Arpeggio

Emi

62

63

64

65

66

P1 (permutation)

P2

P3

P4

Arpeggio 2

Ornamental Arpeggio

67

68

69

70

71

72

P1

P2

P2

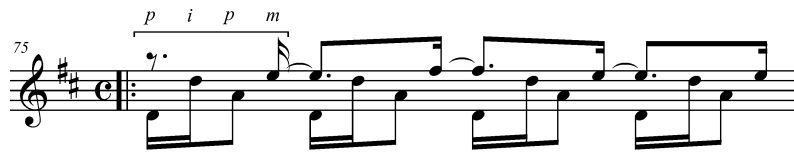
P1

P2

P3

Melodic Ornament

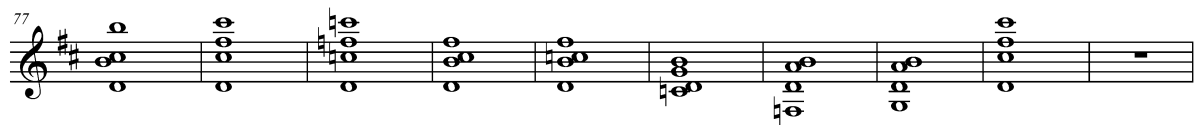
Arpeggio 3 (claw-hammer - syncopated melodic movement)



Arpeggio inverted to place melody on the beat

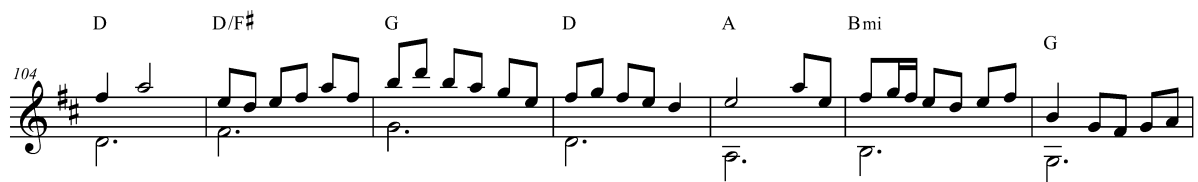
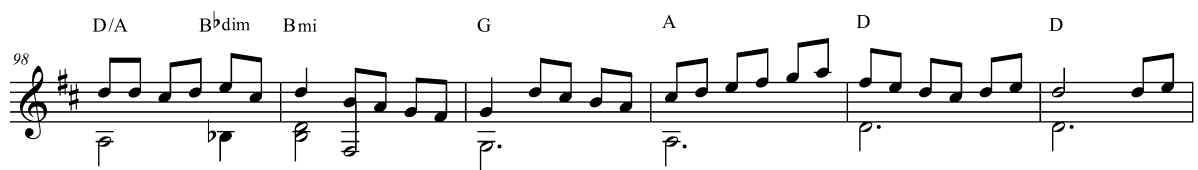
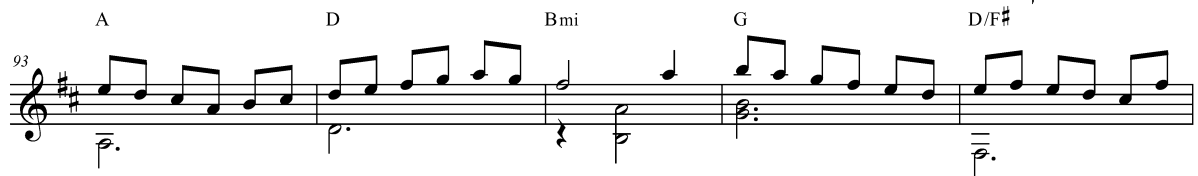
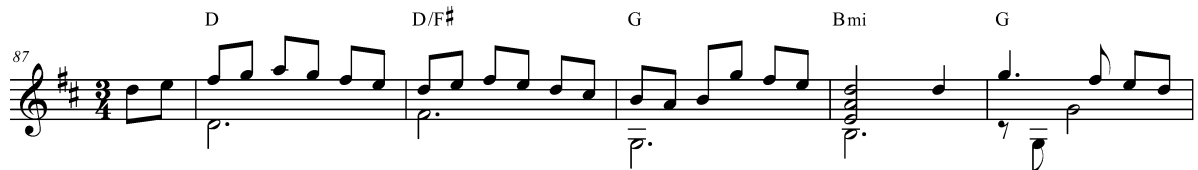


Apply to harmony



Theme

V1



111 A Bmi B^bdim Bmi G D/F[#] G A D D

V2 120 D D/F[#] G Bmi G

126 A D *tr* Bmi G D/F[#]

131 D/A B^bdim Bmi G A D D

137 D D/F[#] G D A Bmi G

144 A G/A F[#]/A Bmi6(11) D/F[#] G A D D

V3

153

D D/F# G Bmi G A D

161

Bmi G D/F# D/A Bmi G A D

169

D D D/F# G D A Bmi Emi

177

A G/A F#/A Bmi6(11) G 3

183

D 3

Cadenza

♩ = 120

D 9



P1 (permutation)

P2

P3



Emi9

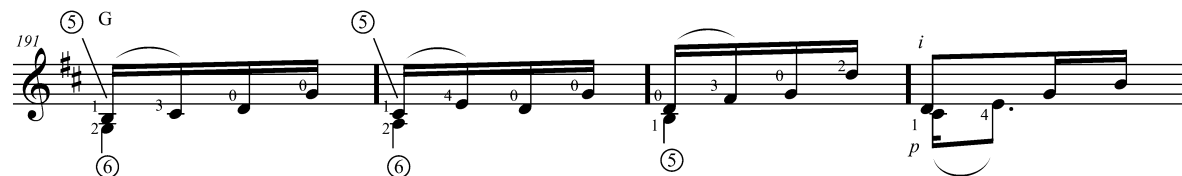


P1

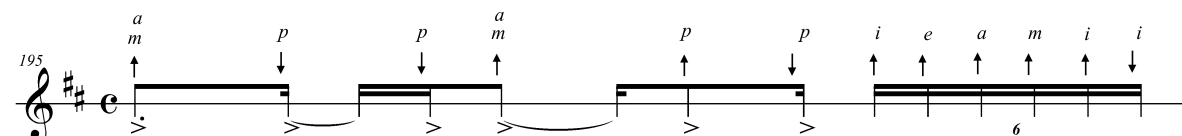
P2

P3

P4



rasgueado pattern (apply freely to referent harmony)



Sonica
Afro-Trance Suite

Anthony Garcia (2014)

Improvisation Frameworks

Including Referent Materials, Variations and Improvisational Strategies and Devices

Percussion Section

[Free interplay of referent material with extended percussion techniques, pentatonic passage work and tonal clusters]

Measures 48-49. Measure 48 features a treble clef, a common time signature, and a whole note chord consisting of a low E and a low G. Measure 49 features a treble clef, a common time signature, and a whole note chord consisting of a low E and a low G. Above measure 49, there are two circled numbers: 3 and 4. Below measure 49, there is a circled number 6. A bracket above measures 48 and 49 indicates a phrase. A tempo marking of 130 is present below measure 48.

Measures 50-51. Measure 50 features a treble clef, a 12/8 time signature, and a series of eighth notes. Measure 51 features a treble clef, a 12/8 time signature, and a series of eighth notes. A bracket above measures 50 and 51 indicates a phrase. A dashed line is present below measure 50.

Bassline Melodic Development

Measures 52-53. Measure 52 features a treble clef, a 12/8 time signature, and a series of eighth notes. Measure 53 features a treble clef, a 12/8 time signature, and a series of eighth notes. Above measure 52, there are two circled numbers: 0 and 3. Above measure 53, there are two circled numbers: 0 and 3. A bracket above measures 52 and 53 indicates a phrase. A tempo marking of *a tempo* is present above measure 52.

Stasis - extend *gamelan* technique interplotting previous melodic material between new responsive improvised content

Measures 54-55. Measure 54 features a treble clef, a 12/8 time signature, and a series of eighth notes. Measure 55 features a treble clef, a 12/8 time signature, and a series of eighth notes. Above measure 54, there are two circled numbers: 0 and 3. Above measure 55, there are two circled numbers: 0 and 3. A bracket above measures 54 and 55 indicates a phrase. A tempo marking of *a tempo* is present above measure 54.

Explore other 9th fret harmonics...

A minor Trance-Vamp

Bass riff and variations

The musical score is written for a single melodic line in treble clef, featuring a variety of time signatures: 8/16, 3/4, 6/8, and 2/4. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the piece is in A minor. The score includes a main bass riff and six variations labeled V1 through V6.

Main Bass Riff: The riff consists of a sequence of eighth and quarter notes, with some measures containing rests. The time signature changes from 8/16 to 3/4, then to 6/8, and finally to 2/4.

Variations:

- V1:** Labeled "LH Tapping ⑥", this variation features a tapping technique on the sixth string of a guitar, indicated by an asterisk (*) and a circled 6. The time signature is 8/16, 3/4, 6/8, and 2/4.
- V2:** Labeled "LH bongo-style percussion on sound board", this variation uses a bongo-style rhythm. It includes fingerings (0, 3, 2, 0) and circled numbers (2, 4). The time signature is 8/16, 3/4, 6/8, and 2/4.
- V3:** This variation features a melodic line with a final measure containing a triplet of eighth notes. Above the notes are the letters "a m i" with arrows pointing to them. The time signature is 8/16, 3/4, 6/8, and 2/4.
- V4:** This variation features a melodic line with a final measure containing a triplet of eighth notes. Above the notes are the letters "a m i" with arrows pointing to them. The time signature is 8/16, 3/4, 6/8, and 2/4.
- V5:** This variation features a melodic line with a final measure containing a triplet of eighth notes. Above the notes are the letters "a m i" with arrows pointing to them. The time signature is 8/16, 3/4, 6/8, and 2/4.
- V6:** This variation features a melodic line with a final measure containing a triplet of eighth notes. Above the notes are the letters "a m i" with arrows pointing to them. The time signature is 8/16, 3/4, 6/8, and 2/4.

87 V7

91

95

99

Interpolate melodic passagework following chord vamp harmony

103

Two-part Melodic Framework

107

Generic Studies [add A minor pentatonic scale variations]

111

115

p *p* *p*

7/8 Vamp

Part I

Emi D/F# G Emi D/F# G

pizz...

Part II

D E Bmi D E Bmi

Improvisation Strategy

Emi D/F# G Interpolate melodic passagework follow vamp rhythm

pizz...

Emi D/F# G

harp-scale pattern

Interpolate melodic passagework between bass riff P1

P1

Improvisational Devices

Kora-style ornamentation

129 $\frac{1}{2}$ CVII -----

i m a

131 $\frac{1}{2}$ CVII -----

i m a

133

i m a

135

Harp-scale Variation Techniques

137 $\frac{1}{2}$ CVII -----

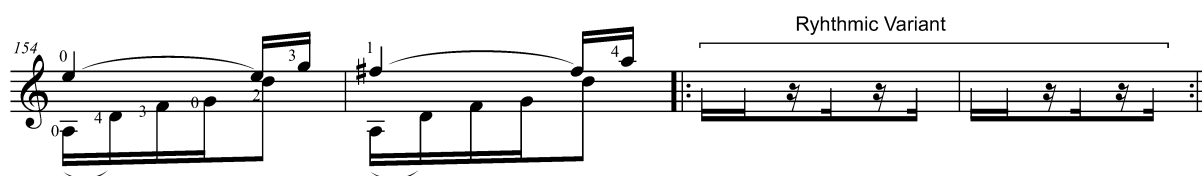
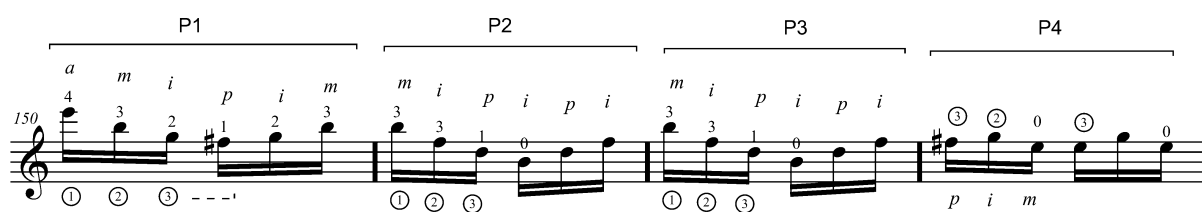
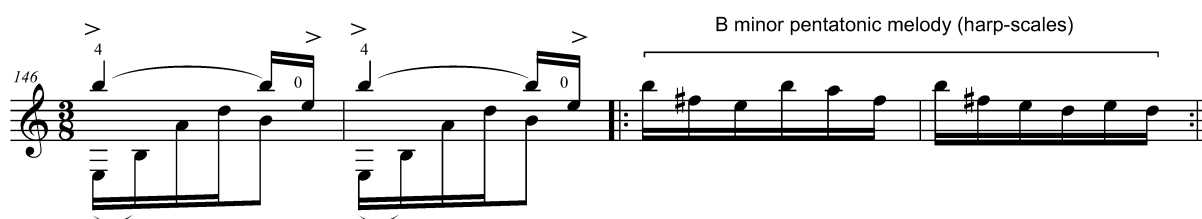
p i m

138 $\frac{1}{2}$ CVII -----

p m i simile...

139 $\frac{1}{2}$ CVII -----

p i m



Mexican Mariachi Rhythm

Study No. 1

Anthony Garcia (2014)

Improvisation Frameworks

Including Referent Materials, Variations and Improvisational Strategies and Devices

Mariachi Rhythm Study No. 1 (A. Garcia 2014)

Improvisation Framework

Optimal Tempo ♩ = 125

Juapango Strumming Pattern (original interpretation)

↑ ↓ ↑ ↓

p i a m a m p i

Staccato Strum

Practice strumming pattern - apply to diverse chord shapes around C major and F major across six strings

Cluster

3

Abstract Harmonic Stimulea:
explore tonal development through simple block chords

4

9

*experiment with tambour fade out using prior rhythms

12

*strike trings behind nut

Thematic and Harmonic Framework

Theme 1 (bass melody integrated with strumming pattern)

Theme 1 musical notation, measures 14-17 and 18-21. The notation is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). Measures 14-17 are marked with a C7 chord. Measures 18-21 are marked with Gmi, Gmi9/A, and C chords. The notation features a bass melody integrated with a strumming pattern, indicated by accents (>) and a flat symbol (b) over the first measure of each group.

Theme 2 - adapted phrase from *Huapango de Moncayo* (Juan Pablo Moncayo)

Theme 2 musical notation, measures 22-25, 30-33, and 38-41. The notation is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). Measures 22-25 are marked with C, G7, C, and G7 chords. Measures 30-33 are marked with C, G7, F, and G7 chords. Measures 38-41 are marked with F, C, F, and C chords. The notation features a melody with a strumming pattern, indicated by accents (>) and a flat symbol (b) over the first measure of each group.

Variation and Development Methodology

Generic Variation Exercises

Generic Variation Exercises (Measures 46-61):

- Measures 46-49: Treble clef, C major, F major. Rhythmic pattern: quarter, eighth, eighth, quarter, quarter, eighth, eighth, quarter.
- Measures 50-53: Treble clef, C major, F major. Rhythmic pattern: quarter, eighth, eighth, quarter, quarter, eighth, eighth, quarter.
- Measures 54-57: Treble clef, C major, F major. Rhythmic pattern: quarter, eighth, eighth, quarter, quarter, eighth, eighth, quarter.
- Measures 58-61: Treble clef, C major, F major. Rhythmic pattern: quarter, eighth, eighth, quarter, quarter, eighth, eighth, quarter. Includes triplets and fingerings (3, 4, 1, 2, 3, 4, 1, 2, 3, 4, 1, 2, 3, 4, 1, 2, 3, 4).

Theme 1 Variations

Theme 1 Variations (Measures 66-79):

- Measures 66-69: Treble clef, C7, VI, p. Rhythmic pattern: quarter, eighth, eighth, quarter, quarter, eighth, eighth, quarter. Includes fingerings (4, 3, 2, 1, 4, 3, 2, 1, 4, 3, 2, 1, 4, 3, 2, 1).
- Measures 70-73: Treble clef, Gmi7, CIII. Rhythmic pattern: quarter, eighth, eighth, quarter, quarter, eighth, eighth, quarter. Includes fingerings (4, 3, 2, 1, 4, 3, 2, 1, 4, 3, 2, 1, 4, 3, 2, 1).
- Measures 74-77: Treble clef, C, F. Rhythmic pattern: quarter, eighth, eighth, quarter, quarter, eighth, eighth, quarter. Includes fingerings (4, 3, 2, 1, 4, 3, 2, 1, 4, 3, 2, 1, 4, 3, 2, 1).
- Measures 78-79: Treble clef, F. Rhythmic pattern: quarter, eighth, eighth, quarter, quarter, eighth, eighth, quarter. Includes fingerings (4, 3, 2, 1, 4, 3, 2, 1, 4, 3, 2, 1, 4, 3, 2, 1).

Bass Development

78

86

a m i p a m i

p

Theme 2 Variations

88

F G7 C F C

96

F C G7 C

104

①

1 3 2 2 3

③

Structural Markers

$\text{♩} = 115$ juxapositional pulsation

Rhythmic Breakdown

$\text{♩} = 125$

Juapango Strumming Pattern (original interpretation) Waltz

Syncopated Waltz Variation

Extensions

Generating Stasis

116

p i simile...

120

p i p i

122

Additional Harmonic Materials

Tonal Cluster over Drone



Jazz Style Cadences

131

D 7b5 11 A 9 C 7b5 11 G 9/B B^b7b5 11 F 7 13 G 7b9 C 9 A^b7 13 C M7

Musical notation for 'Jazz Style Cadences' starting at measure 131. The notation is in 2/4 time and features a series of chords in the right hand. The chords are: D 7b5 11 (measures 131-132), A 9 (measures 133-134), C 7b5 11 (measures 135-136), G 9/B (measures 137-138), B^b7b5 11 (measures 139-140), F 7 13 (measures 141-142), G 7b9 (measures 143-144), C 9 (measures 145-146), A^b7 13 (measures 147-148), and C M7 (measures 149-150).

Rondo Celtino

Anthony Garcia (2014)

Improvisation Frameworks

Including Referent Materials, Variations and Improvisational Strategies and Devices

Rondeau Celtino A. Garcia (2014)

Improvisation Framework

Theme

Dmi Gmi Dmi B \flat
 9 Ami B \flat
 15 F(#11) Ami(M6)

Arpeggio sequence

♩ = 60
 P1
 Dmi Ami9 Dmi Ami9
 P2
 Dmi Ami B \flat 6 Ami

Theme (var. 1.)

27
 31

35

A mi B \flat B \flat F(#11) A mi(M6)

45

Improv. section (contrasting break down)

Closing theme

49

F B \flat A mi A mi F B \flat

53

F C F A mi B \flat

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